Helena THE Gothwell
1798

CHURCH OF SAINT SIFFRID.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF NED EVANS.

Non mesto, non valor, non riverenza
Nè d'età nè di grado, nè di legge;
Non peno di vergogna; non rispetto
Nè d'amor nè di sangue; non memoria
Di ricevuto ben, nè finalmente
Cosa si venerabile, o si santa,
O si giusto esser può, ch'a quella vasta
Cupidigia d'honori, a quella ingorda
Fama d'aver, violabil sia.

GUARINI.

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THE

CHURCH OF SAINT SIFFRID.

CHAP. I.

"Soul, body, fortune! *Ev'ry good pertains*
To one of theſe. But prize not all alike:
The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
Body to ſoul, and ſoul ſubmit to God."

YOUNG.

ARRIVED at Frampton lodge, Conway ſlowly recovered from his bodily indiſpoſition; but his mind, too deeply wounded by his aggravated misfortunes and diſappointments, appeared to have loſt its vigour; and though his reaſon was not impaired by his late malady, his temper, before violent and irritable, ſeemed now to have changed to a ſettled deſpondency. He was become paſſive and gentle, never objecting to any meaſures of Dr. Felton's propoſing; but ſo averſe to converſation, that, whenever the Doctor began to ſpeak, or to entreat an anſwer to any thing he had been ſaying, he would put a book into his hand, or inſtantly leave the room. In compliance with the hint, the Doctor would ſometimes read to him; and Con-

way, who was then neither obliged to liſten nor to anſwer, would endure to ſtay; or ſometimes, if urged to ſpeak, inſtead of anſwering a queſtion, he would fall into an agony of grief, unguardedly mentioning his marriage, now the ſubject that engroſſed all his ideas.

Conway's education had been entirely his father's care: of learning he poſſeſſed both the ſolid and the brilliant; and in all elegant accompliſhments his attainments were as conſpicuous as the very ſmall value he ſet upon them, and the total indifference with which he paſſed by opportunities of ſhining which others ſo anxiouſly ſeek. His father, who intended him for a man of the world, meant that he ſhould attract and prepoſſeſs; he had therefore confined his cares to the cultivation of thoſe qualities that dazzle and allure in the eyes of the great, whilſt ſerious and more important knowledge was left to chance. Mrs. Conway ſaw and lamented the error. She had but few opportunities of ſeeing her ſon, but theſe ſhe conſtantly employed in endeavours to ſupply the deficiency by her inſtructions and example: but, notwithſtanding all her cares, Conway's education, though infinitely more attended to than any of his contemporaries, ſhewed its operations more in his manners than in his ſentiments. Having interceptibly been taught to expect a very large portion of this world's happineſs, he was fooliſhly content with his ſhare, and ſuffered his mind to be diſtracted from every other contemplation; and now that every fair proſpect was faded away, when it was dreadful to look forward, and agonizing to look back, he conſidered himſelf as without hope, and the ſound of conſolation carried with it a reproach, which his diſturbed and wounded mind could not endure.

Doctor

30 68 MAY

Doctor Felton, who had ſuffered from misfortunes, and whoſe piety alone had preſerved him from deſpair and death itſelf, was ſenſibly afflicted at Conway's diſtreſs, and at his indifference to all the conſoling reaſons religion can offer. It was in vain the Doctor paſſed whole hours in pious lectures, or in reading books of divinity; they were no alleviation to Conway's ſufferings, who either diſplayed deſpondence and inattention, or ſullenneſs and impatience. Thus, without hopes of effecting any cure on the mind of his patient, and diſturbed with fears leſt this deſpondence ſhould fix upon the brain, and break out in ſome deſperate outrage, the Doctor anxiouſly longed to ſee or hear from Mr. Conway (who had given him no addreſs), to warn him of the ſuppoſed ſtate of Conway's mind, and to aſſure him that, as far as he was able, he had diſcharged his duty as a phyſician.

Scarcely with leſs anxiety did Mr. Conway himſelf paſs away the time till he could venture to pay a viſit to Frampton. Several letters from Mr. Harwood to his ſon he had received and opened: theſe were all filled with enquiries as to the ſucceſs of his ſearch, with entreaties to write to him or come to Liſbon, where he was with his family, and with many expreſſions of wonder at his ſilence. By the aſſiſtance of theſe letters he was enabled to impoſe on Mrs. Conway, whoſe anxiety to hear from her ſon had ſurmounted all her reſolutions of ſilence; and ſhe was only diverted from writing to him by being told he and Harwood were amuſing themſelves by travelling from place to place in Spain and Portugal, and that in all probability he was now on his return to England. But theſe impoſitions muſt be diſcovered ſome time or other, Mr. Conway very well knew; he was there-

fore in haſte to find an opportunity of making a journey to Frampton, particularly as the Trecaſtle family was preparing to remove to Strathener Caſtle.

It was therefore abſolutely neceſſary, if Conway's malady continued, that he ſhould be removed from Frampton-lodge, becauſe Lord Caerleon and his father uſually paſſed ſome weeks there in the ſhooting ſeaſon. If, on the contrary, he were ſufficiently recovered to mingle with his uncle's family at Strathener, where Mr. and Mrs. Conway as uſual were invited to ſpend the ſummer, Mr. Conway hoped, from a variety of circumſtances, to come to ſome fair compromiſe and agreement with his ſon, which would be the means of their reconciliation.

He therefore eagerly accepted Lord Trecaſtle's invitation to Mrs. Conway to accompany her niece into Wales, without having allowed her any choice on the occaſion, who would much rather have remained in London in hopes of an earlier meeting with her ſon, though ſhe was diſturbed at his ſuppoſed neglectful ſilence. But it ſuited his purpoſe better for many reaſons, that Mrs. Conway ſhould accompany Lady Octavia, whom he began to ſuſpect of a reſolution to take a decided part in the Count de Clerac's favour; and as ſuch a determination carried into execution would have totally deranged his plans, he imagined Lady Octavia would be leſs at liberty to purſue her own ſchemes whilſt her aunt was with her, than quite alone; as Lady Caerleon and her Lord both remained ſome time longer, in town. With all the laborious and indefatigable pains of a ſchemer, having effected thus much of his purpoſe, on the ſame day that Lord Trecaſtle ſet out for Strathener

Mr.

Mr. Conway began his journey to Frampton-lodge.

Mr. Conway was not more grieved than ſurpriſed at his ſon's altered appearance. His perſon thin and emaciated, his countenance wild and haggard, and his dreſs neglected, beſpoke at once the ravages of ſickneſs on his body and mind. His almoſt extorted replies to Mr. Conway's queſtions and enquiries only ſerved to increaſe the remorſe he felt at having proceeded with ſuch unpardonable harſhneſs; yet even this was inſufficient to make him lay aſide the pernicious purpoſe that had already been of ſuch miſchievous conſequences to Conway. He was even in haſte to make new propoſals, and, ſeizing the firſt opportunity in Dr. Felton's abſence, he began by ſaying he was not ignorant of the cauſe of his ſon's illneſs, and by lamenting that now he had the inclination he had not the power to conſent to his wiſhes.

Conway's countenance changed like that of a wretch under the torture; but, according to his of late accuſtomed manner, he returned no anſwer; and Mr. Conway continued, "Had I known, Harry, *why* you refuſed to accede to a former propoſal I have often repeated, I might perhaps, when there was apparently no obſtacle, have complied with your inclinations, and by complying have involved you in ſtill greater diſtreſs. I cannot help thinking therefore that your ſilence and reſerve towards me, though I have not merited it, has been of material ſervice to you; ſince Lord Carloville would doubtleſs have exerted a prior right, which you would have been moſt unwilling to allow, without the ſlighteſt power to diſpute it."—"Do you not ſee," ſaid Mr. Conway, after having waited, in vain, for an anſwer—

" do you not perceive how much perplexity you have eſcaped ?"

" I perceive nothing but the deſpair and miſery into which I am fallen !" ſaid Conway in a deſponding tone, after a long pauſe.

" I never ſuſpected you before of cowardice or want of fortitude," rejoined Mr. Conway, in rather a recriminating accent ; " but thus wilfully ſinking under an evil which from the firſt you knew to be without a remedy, is weak and effeminate."

" I have no reſpect for any of thoſe qualities the world calls virtues," ſaid Conway, gloomily,—" I am convinced the moſt deſpicable are the happieſt !"—His thoughts at that moment were deeply fixed upon Ethelreda and Carloville.

" I know not why you ſhould not be happy," ſaid Mr. Conway. " I will leave nothing on my part untried to make you ſo, and in return I only aſk your compliance to what it can no longer be of any conſequence to you to refuſe."

" It can be of no conſequence to me !" ſaid Conway with a weary air, rouſing himſelf from his reverie, having juſt caught the laſt words.

" Do you conſent ?" cried his father, eagerly.

" Conſent ?" repeated Conway.

" I do not mean to urge you at preſent, Henry," ſaid his father, in a ſoftened tone ; " but I would have you accompany me to Strathener, where I do not doubt you will ſoon recover your ſpirits and your health ; and perhaps before the family returns to town, Lady Octavia may be prevailed on to give you her hand."

" I have already received a hand," cried Conway, " and with it anguiſh and deſpair !

But

But it is a gift I would not relinquiſh or exchange for all the honours and bleſſings the whole world can offer !"—There was ſo much wildneſs and enthuſiaſm in Conway's tone, and ſo much animation in his countenance, which ſuddenly changed from the deepeſt gloom to ſomething like pleaſure, that, with the vivacity of his manner, in ſome degree juſtified the thought that immediately returned to Mr. Conway's recollection, that his ſon's intellects were ſtill ſubject to the wanderings of fever. In a voice of deep dejection, he aſked what he meant.

" I mean that I am married !" cried Conway, exultingly. " But I have no wife," continued he, lowering his tone and falling into an agony of grief. Then ſtriking his head with violence, he ſuddenly ruſhed out of the room, leaving Mr. Conway ſtupified and annihilated with grief, fear, and amazement.

Mr. Conway, now thoroughly convinced that his ſon's mind was diſordered, both from his extravagant actions and the marriage he talked of, which the former never ſuſpected to have taken place, but rather imagined his ravings were occaſioned by intenſely dwelling on the ſame ſubject, was utterly at a loſs to proceed. He began to blame himſelf for having rouſed him into diſtraction by ſpeaking of his marriage with Octavi ; and this ſuppoſed proof of a violently diſtempered mind added conſiderably to his diſtreſs, becauſe it helped to convince him of the inveteracy of the diſorder, which he began to fear would end in confirmed derangement. In all theſe torturing apprehenſions and melancholy fears he was confirmed by Dr. Felton. Not indeed from the Doctor's own opinion, but by the half ſentences

and exclamations he repeated, which Conway from time to time in the anguiſh of his heart had uttered. Theſe the Doctor did not relate as arguments of his inſanity, unacquainted as he was with Conway's hiſtory; he only repeated them as incitements to the compaſſion and compliance of his friends, whom he ſuſpected of exerciſing an unwarrantable degree of power. But to Mr. Conway every monoſyllable was a convincing proof that Conway's paſſions had triumphed over his reaſon. In the event Mr. Conway endeavoured to juſtify himſelf, and be reconciled to his own harſhneſs: he would moſt willingly have taken a load of bitterneſs from his own heart by perſuading himſelf, that, without his interference, to his ſon the conſequences would have been the ſame; but he was already too deeply penetrated by the conſciouſneſs of having been highly inſtrumental in the preſent melancholy cataſtrophe, to be blinded by the fallacy of his own arguments; and he returned to Strathener, partly to avoid the ſight of his ſon; uneaſy, reſtleſs, fearful leſt his journey, though by no means uncommon, ſhould excite ſuſpicions and curioſity. Tormented with the horror of having brought the deepeſt calamity upon himſelf, and without having come to any reſolution for his ſon's removal, he was in continual fear of ſome diſcovery detrimental to his character as a parent and a man; and to aggravate his misfortunes, thoſe ſchemes of unjuſtifiable ambition and inſatiable avarice, that had incited him to proceed ſuch unwarrantable lengths, were equally ſufferers, ſince they were ſo cloſely connected with Conway.

Indeed, at Strathener every thing ſeemed to have taken a new turn. Lord Trecaſtle, piqued at

at the refuſal of Lord and Lady Caerleon to accompany him into Wales, had not yet recovered his good humour. Mrs. Conway, taken up with her ſon's ſilence, and entirely abſorbed in her anxiety to ſee him, and the numerous conjectures that preſented themſelves to her mind upon the ſubject of Ethelreda's ſtrange abſence, together with the malicious aſperſions of Lady Mariamne, could neither amuſe by her converſation, nor receive pleaſure from that of others. Lady Octavia, as uſual, vain and petulant, was more than uſually ill-tempered; and Mr. Conway ſo much changed in his manners as to excite the animadverſions of the whole family. To complete the novelty of the ſcene, there was not as yet, owing to the unuſually bad weather, one ſingle viſitor at Strathener, to help to diſpel the gloom of this at preſent unſociable family; a circumſtance that now occurred for the firſt time in the reſidence of the preſent Earl of Trecaſtle.

Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Lady Mariamne had been ſome time arrived at Kilgaren-hall. They returned to their ſeat about the ſame time Lord Carloville took poſſeſſion of St. Siffrid's Caſtle. Lady Mariamne, by means of a written card, propoſed the terms of reconciliation; which were, that they ſhould immediately return to their houſe in the country, which, out of compliance to Sir Francis, ſhe condeſcended to call by its new name *Caſino Belvedere*.

The Baronet, more than ſatisfied by ſuch a mark of condeſcenſion, returned his compliments, that he would be ready to attend her Ladyſhip; and accordingly they commenced their journey on the firſt day fixed on by Lady Mariamne.

As

As for Lord Carloville, having found from his lawyers that his ſuit was likely to have an unfavourable iſſue, he began to incline to a compromiſe; and therefore gave the neceſſary inſtructions to his counſel, before he left town, at Lady Mariamne's preſſing inſtigations, in order to try if it were yet poſſible to find Ethelreda, partly for his own ſatisfaction, and partly to deceive Lady Mariamne, whom, he hoped, by judiciouſly flattering her inclinations, he ſhould in time bring over to the entire approbation of a plan as extraordinary as it was infamous.

In conſequence of the ſcheme he had in agitation, Lord Carloville neglected no opportunity, before the departure from town of the L'Eſterling family, of cultivating an intimacy with Sir Francis; who, though he diſliked the man, was not proof againſt his inſinuating manners, and poſſeſſed much too large a ſhare of vanity to receive his flattery with the coolneſs his frequent intruſions deſerved. Under pretence therefore of making enquiries of Sir Francis reſpecting the Harwoods, the neceſſary repairs of the Caſtle, pretended negociations for taking a leaſe, and numberleſs propoſals and objections with regard to the rent, which had not yet been ſettled; Lord Carloville contrived to eſtabliſh himſelf on ſo firm a footing at Caſino Belvedere, that few weeks paſſed in which he was not at leaſt three or four days of the ſeven the gueſt of Sir Francis, or rather of his lady.

Indeed Lord Carloville, animated with the true ſpirit of friendſhip, whilſt Sir Francis was ſpending his mornings in culling lines from the Italian poets, in order to *compile* a ſonnet, or projecting ſome brilliant entertainment, or waſting whole reams of paper in plans of architec-

ture

ture in orders of his own inventing—Lord Carloville, with Lady Mariamne leaning on his arm, and accompanied by Sir Francis's bailiff, uſually walked over the grounds that ſurrounded the houſe which Sir Francis had lately purchaſed, computing its value and that of the St. Siffrid's eſtates; ſometimes in ſuggeſting improvements in agriculture, and lamenting the wild extravagance of his *friend*; and ſometimes earneſtly recommending Lady Mariamne to uſe all her power in retrenching the innumerable and expenſive entertainments in which Sir Francis was ſo fond of waſting his income.

To thwart and contradict Sir Francis was one of Lady Mariamne's darling pleaſures, as it was become her chief ſatisfaction to pleaſe Lord Carloville, who ſaw with delight the influence he poſſeſſed, and the altercations, diſputes and quarrels, his *well-meant* advice never failed to create between this jarring and ill-aſſorted pair. But on their diſſenſions he built his own ſucceſs; neither was it any detriment to his plans, but the contrary, that the ſervants of the family began to whiſper ſtrange ſurmiſes on his Lordſhip's extreme deference and attention to Lady Mariamne.

At St. Siffrid's, if Lord Carloville continued the *praiſe* of œconomy, the practice of it was thrown aſide. Not that there was any thing magnificent in his eſtabliſhment, nor was his table as expenſive in a week, as that of the late Sir Roger L'Eſterling in one day, from the remains of whoſe princely but old faſhioned feaſt half the poor in the country was maintained. But in return, his ſtud contained ſome of the fineſt racers in the kingdom, who had won numberleſs plates, and, what is more to the purpoſe, enormous bets. Upon theſe winnings

Lord

Lord Carloville entertained a ſet of diſſolute young men—whether of his own rank or not, he was not over-ſcrupulous. All the morning, nothing was to be heard but the ſound of dice, and the half joking half ſerious execrations of the loſing gameſters; in the evening, the boiſterous and vociferous mirth or petulant and quarrelſome altercations of intoxication.

As all ceremony was aboliſhed among this jovial and happy circle, the gueſts at St. Siffrid's were never ſuffered to interfere with Lord Carloville's frequent engagements at Caſino Belvedere; and to the noiſy party, whilſt its amuſements were uninterrupted, the abſence of one more of its aſſociates was no cauſe of regret. The Count de Clerac-Auxerre, who before his pretended death owed conſiderable ſums to Carloville, and who, unable to make them good, had contracted freſh debts inſtead of diminiſhing the old ones, with equal folly and levity for ſome time paſt had made one of this licentious and unprincipled ſet; though, in conſequence of a very plain intimation from Lord Trecaſtle, he did not viſit at Strathener, neither had he made his appearance at Sir Francis L'Eſterling's.

This deciſion of Lord Trecaſtle's having been made in deference to Mr. Conway's advice and frequent warnings, he was tolerably well aware of the cauſe of Lady Octavia's ill-humour; and judging from her well-known rebellious ſpirit, which, having always been treated with unbounded indulgence, knew not how to ſubmit, he thought it expedient to beſtow ſome attention to her movements; as he knew her capable of acting perverſely againſt her judgment, becauſe ſhe would not be controuled.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

——chi ricorre all' arte,
Benche ancor non tradiſca, e ſul cammino
L'artificio alla frode è aſſai vicino.

METASTASIO.

IT was not without ſome reaſon that Mr. Conway ſuſpected his niece. De Clerac's reſidence at Lord Carloville's was not an accidental, but a concerted thing. Lady Octavia, in conſequence of her father's poſitive commands that ſhe ſhould think no more of him, had come to a decided determination in the Count's favour; and as Mrs. Conway's company was a reſtraint upon her actions the exigency of the caſe would not brook, Lady Octavia, though delicate to *exceſs*, was under the neceſſity of riſing at four in the morning in order to keep appointments and make new aſſignations. Beſides, there was ſomething ſo charmingly romantic in going out at day-break with a milking-pail, a flat-crowned beaver hat and a ſcarlet mantle, to meet a lover! free from the tyrannical perſecutions of an unfeeling father, a prying uncle, and a ſcrutinizing aunt! So diſintereſted too! With a fortune of forty thouſand pounds, ſhe had reſolved to forfeit ten by marrying againſt her father's conſent. What a wonderful ſacrifice! and, provided the pleaſure of contradiction is not taken into the account, a perfect pattern for all future heroines.

As for the Count, he was the moſt tender and elegant ſhepherd that ever kept a flock or drove a herd! Indeed, his appearance was almoſt as

natural

natural as a *berger* in the ballet of an opera! And ſo much did his diſguiſe relieve his figure in Lady Octavia's eyes, that ſhe was in continual fear leſt his noble mien ſhould lead to a diſcovery. But all this was axactly as it ſhould be: for the Count very well knew, had he looked like a clown, even in the dreſs of one, her ladyſhip would preſently have changed the deſtination of her wealth.

Mr. Conway, who held it as a maxim, that all men of ſtudy and contemplation, particularly ſtateſmen, muſt be early riſers, was never later than five o'clock, when an unagitated mind would allow him to ſleep ſo long: but ſince his late viſit to Frampton, he had often begun his morning perambulations through the long galleries at day-break; inſomuch that the domeſtics of the family had ſet it down for a certainty, that their lord's brother had a troubled conſcience. He had been meaſuring his ſilent ſteps for more than half an hour up and down a gallery, at the end of which the firſt rays of the morning caſt a yellow light upon Lady Octavia's door. Mr. Conway ſtood at the farther end of the gallery, and forgot his contemplations to admire it. Preſently the door opened gently, when he ſaw, by the light which ſhone upon her figure, a milk-maid, completely equipped with a pail, and with ſo much the appearance of a country girl, that, had he ſeen her in any other part of the houſe, ſhe would have paſſed unnoticed; but coming out of Lady Octavia's room carried ſuſpicion with it. Mr. Conway concluded ſhe was at leaſt a meſſenger; and purſuing her haſtily down the ſtair-caſe into the hall, he overtook her juſt as ſhe was unlocking a ſmall door leading into the gardens. Mr. Conway called to her to go no further!

"No

"No Saxon!"—cried ſhe in Welſh, endeavouring to diſguiſe her voice under a tolerable degree of accent, and ſtill trying to make her eſcape. In her hurry, however, ſhe had forgotten which way to turn the key. He advanced to her, ſomewhat roughly ſeized her arm, and, looking ſteadily in her face, immediately recognized Lady Octavia! But of the two he was infinitely the moſt confounded. He continued to look at her ſome time in ſilence.

"Well, ſir!"—cried ſhe with an aſſured manner and pert tone, "now you know who I am, I hope you are ſatisfied?—I know I think you have taken a great liberty."

"No, madam, I am not," ſaid Mr. Conway, recovering himſelf; "nor ſhall I be ſatisfied till I hear what can have tempted you to this extraordinary diſguiſe. There can be no excuſe for it."

"Really I don't mean to make any; but if I muſt tell"—ſaid Octavia, affecting to laugh, "I was going to milk goats!"

"And ſo Lady Octavia Conway—'even in theſe honeſt mean habiliments'—ſteals out of her father's houſe at four o'clock in the morning to milk goats!" ſaid Mr. Conway, affecting to laugh too in a moſt provoking manner.

"I am determined to go, notwithſtanding your ridicule," ſaid Octavia, trying to make her eſcape from her uncle.

"But I cannot anſwer letting you go alone, my dear"—ſaid he, ſtill holding her hand. "Beſides, I wiſh extremely to ſee how you perform in your new character."

"I will not be ſo inſulted," cried Octavia, burſting into tears of rage: "You think, ſir, to tyranize and domineer over the whole family:

ly: but I will do as I pleaſe in my father's houſe; I will complain to him this very morning."

"And what will your ladyſhip complain of?" ſaid Mr. Conway, calmly. "Tell, and perhaps I may let you go."

"That you have taken upon you more authority than I chooſe to ſubmit to, by attempting to controul me in an innocent project——"

"Which I diſcover to be the diſguiſe of a project not altogether ſo innocent, Lady Octavia!"—continued he ſeriouſly, and fixing his eyes ſteadily upon her: "I ſuſpect that you are—or rather were, on the point of quitting your father's houſe in diſobedience to his ſtrict commands, with the certain forfeiture of part of your fortune. I am not apt to draw falſe concluſions; and now, I will frankly own, your teſtimony can neither change nor ſtrengthen my opinion."

Lady Octavia again burſt into tears of anger and diſappointment, and was making towards the ſtairs without anſwering, when Mr. Conway took her by the hand, and led her back to a chair.

"I am too much your friend, Lady Octavia," ſaid he in a ſolemn and aſſuming tone, "to let ſlip this occaſion of repreſenting to you the danger and raſhneſs of the ſtep you are about to take, and from which, if it be poſſible, I will diſſuade you. It would be more compatible with the duties of that relationſhip in which I ſtand towards your father and yourſelf, if I were to ſay I would prevent you—it is what I owe to myſelf—to you—and to your family."

"I ſhould be glad to know," ſaid Octavia, half choked with her own paſſion and her uncle's

cle's pomp—" I ſhould be glad to know how my actions can interfere with your credit!—You may depend upon it, we ſhall *never* be more nearly connected than we are preſent.—And I doubt not," added ſhe ſpitefully, " but your ſon has already made Lady Carloville the ſame aſſurances—in ſpite of your machinations to the contrary."

Though theſe laſt words were ſpoken without any extraordinary emphaſis, Mr. Conway trembled at their implication, and thought he already ſaw, in the inſulting yet mortified countenance of Octavia, the developing of all his paſt meaſures as well as thoſe yet un-accompliſhed. In a moment deſcending from his high tone of authority, and lowering his voice to the moſt moderate and conciliating one—" I am ſorry, my dear Octavia, that Conway's conduct ſhould have had ſo deſperate an effect on yours; I am deeply grieved that a temporary infatuation he will always have reaſon to regret, ſhould have irritated you to throw yourſelf away on a downright adventurer; for ſuch I cannot help conſidering the Count, a man who can no longer chooſe between his title and his patrimony."

" And ſuppoſe *I* had but one choice to make, I would ſpurn at Henry Conway, whilſt the Count de Clerac even without his patrimony is the alternative ſo infinitely ſuperior."

" In that caſe," ſaid Mr. Conway, ſcarcely able to command either his muſcles or his voice, " I ſhall fully acquaint Lord Trecaſtle with what has paſſed this morning."

" I defy you!"—cried Octavia, in an undaunted tone.

Lady Octavia's " I defy you," though without any other meaning than provoking inſolence,

lence, was ſufficient to bring Mr. Conway to moderation in his terms. "You defy me?" repeated he, cautiouſly. "Do you not know how much you are in my power, Lady Octavia?"

"In your power, ſir?—I ſuppoſe I could revenge myſelf if I were exaſperated—I ſhall not condeſcend to aſk for your ſilence; for at any rate I believe my power is equal to my will—at leaſt I would wiſh you to underſtand, Mr. Conway, that I am not to be menaced."

"Who is menacing you, Lady Octavia?—What is it you fear?—I am vexed to ſee you ſo alarmed at a trifling occurrence like the one of this morning; an occurrence, if you will hear reaſon, ſo eaſily compromiſed: but really your ladyſhip is ſo extremely ſuſpicious—tenacious—ſo very haſty, I mean, that it is impoſſible to diſcuſs coolly with you a common ſubject."

"Oh pray, ſir, do not let my warmth throw you off your guard for the future. I will confeſs, I never ſaw my uncle in a paſſion before: but, upon my honour, you looked juſt now ſo *frightful* with rage! exactly like my father!"

"For Heaven's ſake, Lady Octavia, give me leave to ſpeak without interruption, if it be but for five minutes!"

"Well, ſir?"

"I intend to propoſe the moſt advantageous terms to you, Lady Octavia, in ſo much that I am certain you cannot object to them. Provided you will think no more of the Count de Clerac, I will anſwer for Conway's fulfilling his firſt engagements, and joyfully returning to his allegiance; in that caſe a general amneſty ſhall be paſſed, and I will pledge myſelf not to mention a ſyllable of this morning's diſagreement."

"Your

"Your terms are really irreſiſtible!" cried Octavia, ironically: "but Mr. Harry Conway's allegiance requires ſo very powerful a guarantee——"

"Oh, leave that to me!"—cried Mr. Conway, whoſe eagerneſs made him overlook the manner of Octavia's conſent: "all I aſk, and that I cannot poſſibly diſpenſe with, is your ſolemn promiſe to accept Henry Conway in marriage—to ſwear to me that you will meet him at the altar."

All you aſk!—You are really very moderate!" rejoined Octavia, in the ſame tone.

"I am *ſerious*, Lady Octavia."

"I muſt conſider of it," ſaid ſhe, after having pondered ſome time.

"I muſt have an immediate anſwer," ſaid Mr. Conway, "becauſe my reſolutions are already taken. For your ſake, I am willing to moderate the rigour of my firſt intentions, by uniting your intereſts with thoſe of my ſon."

"You have no right to tyrannize over my happineſs, or direct my choice," cried Octavia, ſhedding a few ſpiteful tears. "But, thank Heaven! if I do conſent, it will always be in my power to revenge my own untoward fate on the wretched tool of your deſpotiſm: it is not impoſſible, unfeeling as you are, but you may one day repent, in your ſon's fate, having made me miſerable to gratify your avarice—for I have long ſeen your motives, ſir."

"I did not imagine you had been ſo blind to your own perfections, madam!—But all this is very fine: you are not diſpleaſed in your heart, I know, on the knowledge of which I place a ſtrong dependence, notwithſtanding your ill-humour. But to come to the point; do

do you," preſenting his pocket-book, on the leaves of which he had been writing—" do you chooſe to write your name to this ſolemn promiſe?—or muſt I repreſent to your father, that it is neceſſary you be locked up to prevent your diſgracing your family?"

Octavia, irritated beyond all bearing at the ſtyle of her uncle's harangue, rudely ſnatched the tablets from his hand, and haſtily ſcrawled her name to ratify the agreement; then, contemptuouſly throwing them upon the floor, ſhe fled up ſtairs, partly to hide her laughter, which contended with her rage, but more anxious to deviſe means by which ſhe could inform the Count of this new and unexpected reverſe of fortune, which, however, appeared to her in no very ſerious light, as ſhe ſcoffed at the bare idea of being bound by an extorted promiſe.

" If ſhe had known any thing to my prejudice," ſaid Mr. Conway to himſelf, as he took up the tablets, " ſhe would not have conſented ſo eaſily: but ' conſcience, conſcience doth make cowards of us all!' "

All that Mr. Conway had juſt effected, had been the thought of the moment, ariſing from the manifeſt advantages his accidental diſcovery of Lady Octavia's intentions had given him: but when he came to recollect and reflect on the promiſes he had ſo amply made for Conway—promiſes which he knew him, at that moment, the moſt obſtinately averſe from fulfilling—he almoſt repented of what he had, in the heat of his contention, conſidered as the moſt certain aſſurance of ſucceſs. He wanted no knew proof to be convinced of Conway's firmneſs, or of his attachment to Ethelreda; he had already found her previous marriage an argument of no force or conſequence. He knew

knew of no other to urge; and now having, as he imagined, revived Lady Octavia's partiality, and bound himself for a return to it; upon a calm reviſal, he perceived and acknowledged, that the ſtep he had taken was the moſt probable one to precipitate the diſcovery of every circumſtance he ſo much wiſhed to conceal. It was not till his perplexity had riſen to a tormenting height, that Mr. Conway recollected the moſt inſuperable of all bars to his meaſures, Conway's repeated declarations that he was already married.

But, perplexed as he was, Mr. Conway could not reſolve to relinquiſh his deſigns. Inſtead therefore of relaxing in the ſtrictneſs of his obſervations on Lady Octavia, he kept ſo ſevere a ſcrutiny over her actions, that notwithſtanding her numerous contrivances ſhe could fall on no plan to elude the vigilance of her uncle, who effectually prevented her coming to any explanation with the Count de Clerac on the ſubject of their late agreement; hoping, by the apparent indifference of Octavia, to detach the Count entirely from the purſuit, without any further diſcuſſion between them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Proper deformity ſeems not in the fiend
So horrid, as in women.

LEAR.

SIR Francis L'Eſterling, whoſe dove-like lady daily exerciſed ſome new ſtretch of power over him or his houſehold, either in curtailing the number of his gueſts, diminiſhing or increaſing that of his ſervants, in countermanding his orders, deranging his entertainments, or ridiculing his projects, juſt as the ſpring that governed all her actions, either from caprice or deſign, directed, had long been projecting his own emancipation from a yoke ſo inſupportable. Not that Sir Francis meant to rid himſelf of his tormentor by a formal ſeparation, but, by a well-timed and vigorous exertion of power, to curb in ſome degree the tyrannical and overbearing ſpirit of Lady Mariamne.

It was partly to gratify his own frivolous taſte for trifles and oſtentatious ſhow, or to make a parade with what he called his *taſte*, and partly to hint to his lady he *would* have a will of his own, that Sir Francis had, after many ſtruggles and contentions with his imperious wife, prevailed ſo far as to be allowed to appoint a meeting of the ſociety of South Cambrian Bowmen, of which he was a member.

Sir Francis, who plumed himſelf on having gained ſo potent an advantage, was, however, far from ſuſpecting to what influence beſides his own he was indebted for this conceſſion; or, that a ſlight quarrel between Lady Mariamne and

and Lord Carloville had aſſiſted the revolution in his favour. For Carloville, who contrived very dexterouſly to practice a new ſpecies of œconomy upon Sir Francis's affairs, was decidedly againſt the meeting; judging from his turn for ſhow, and the exceſſive ſplendour that always reigned in his moſt ordinary entertainments, that this, which was intended to include a very large number of gueſts, would be proportionally expenſive.

But Lady Mariamne, whoſe impatience that ſomething decided ſhould be done by Carloville for the recovery of Ethelreda's perſon, and whoſe evil conſcience always prompted her to ſuſpect her confederate of treachery and diſguiſe in his intentions towards her, and reſearches after the loſt Ethelreda, had of late, in order to quiet her apprehenſions, employed ſpies on his ſervants; by whoſe means, according to the inſtructions theſe emiſſaries had received, ſhe ſuſpected him of holding a correſpondence with his wife, whilſt to her he proteſted and ſwore the moſt profound ignorance of every thing that concerned her. Lady Mariamne received the directions of all his letters; amongſt which a woman's name tortured and diſtracted her ſoul, and made her conclude this correſpondent under a feigned name could be no other than Ethelreda.

After having endured for ſome weeks the miſery of diſtruſt; withheld from opening the letters, more from a fear of diſcovery, than right principles; not daring to avow her ſuſpicions to Carloville, leſt he ſhould at once diſcontinue his attentions and own the truth—(for the motives of his attachment ſhe had not yet penetrated, and ſhe felt that, deeply as Carlo-

ville had found means to ingratiate himſelf, any explanation that deſtroyed her illuſion, unprincipled as it was, would be inſupportable)—thus irritated by ſurmiſes not without foundation, her naturally imperious temper could not reſtrain itſelf within the bounds of civility even to Carloville, whoſe ſcrutinizing eye perceived the alteration in her countenance when ſhe addreſſed him, even before it had influenced her manner. It was with ſerious alarm he firſt diſcerned her conſtrained and half rude behaviour, and dreaded, from what he called the natural ficklenefs of her ſex, the overthrow of all his ſchemes before they were mature.

The firſt decided ſymptom of a revolt was her ladyſhip's half-reluctant and ungracious acquieſcence in Sir Francis's propoſal for the autumn meeting of South Cambrian Bowmen, at Caſino Belvidere.

Carloville now perceived it was time to aſk for an explanation of her conduct, ſo diametrically oppoſite to the plan they had laid down and agreed to follow. Lady Mariamne at firſt was ſullen, and refuſed to account for her changed deportment, or to allow that her manners towards Lord Carloville were altered; but her pride, though powerful, was inferior to her partiality. After two or three ſweeps acroſs the room, with the tone and countenance of an enraged Sultana, ſhe bad him aſk his own heart, which could ſufficiently explain to him the reaſons of her conduct.

"I have no heart!" cried he gaily, ſeizing her hand, "and I perceive that all this confuſion ariſes from your having two!"

Angry as ſhe was, Lady Mariamne could not avoid half diſmiſſing her frown; and, lowering her voice to a more peaceable tone, though her

her manner was determined and ſerious, ſhe ſaid, "It is true, my lord, I have no actual right to control your conduct; and though you have long proteſted to me my entire power over your affections, I cannot help thinking—I ſuſpect—"

"What? What do you ſuſpect?" cried Carloville impatiently.

"That you are at this moment in correſpondence with that woman, whom I deteſt, whom I abhor. I ſuſpect—I *know* that I am your dupe!"

Carloville was famous for preſence of mind: he ſeized both the hands of the irritated lady, fortunately recollecting that Cicero by a bold figure calls them the *orator's weapons*; then, ſteadily looking in her face as if to obſerve her countenance, he ſaid, "It is very true, I have been writing to her this morning."

Lady Mariamne could not ſpeak; but ſhe ſtruggled violently to releaſe her hands.

"One moment's patience!" cried he. "Let me entreat you to be calm whilſt I explain myſelf."

"Calm!" cried ſhe, finding utterance for her rage, in a terrifying tone.

"She is dying, ſhe is dead, perhaps!" exclaimed Carloville, alarmed at her vehemence, and the dæmoniac air of her countenance.

"A falſehood! a lie! infamous—diſſembling—"

"'Tis true, upon my ſoul! by all that's ſacred!" repeated Carloville, with many oaths. "You will not ſuffer me to explain myſelf," ſaid he, taking advantage of the ſilence of her rage, "but I ſwear to you, and you ſhall dictate the oath, to bring you proofs of the truth if you ſtill doubt me;—but I have ſome

time known the place of her concealment. In hopes of ſecuring her perſon, and ſparing you the anxiety of ſuſpenſe, I have refrained from communicating the diſcovery to you; but I am now credibly informed by an agent whom I cannot ſuſpect of colluſion, that this woman, whom you, and I more eſpecially, have ſo much reaſon to hate, is at her laſt gaſp."

"Is it true? Is it poſſible?" exclaimed Lady Mariamne, in a kind of tranſport. "Carloville," added ſhe, lowering her voice, "if ſhe die, we ſhall be happy: but if you have deceived me, if you can be ſuch a devil, you ſhall find me one."

"I ſhall deſerve it of you," ſaid Carloville, kiſſing her hand, which ſhe held out to him in reconciliation, as he was about to take leave. "You forgive me, then?"

"Certainly.—I ſhall ſee you to-morrow?"

"No, not to-morrow; that will be impoſſible; but as ſoon as I can leave the Caſtle. Adieu! dear lady Mariamne!"

"Adio, Carloville!" cried the paſſive creature.

"Devil!" repeated Carloville, as he walked down the terrace to his horſes, which waited for him—"Devil! I implicitly believe her ladyſhip!—a dæmon—a ſalamander——Tiſiphone herſelf is an angel of meekneſs to ſuch a woman!"

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Praiſing what is loſt,
Makes the remembrance dear.
SHAKESPEARE.

NOT many days after this fracas with Lady Mariamne, Lord Carloville, in examining every part of the domain, and computing its value, accidentally ſtrolled into the Church, which had been repreſented to him by the domeſtics of the Caſtle, as wanting repairs, which Sir Francis L'Eſterling, altogether careleſs about the condition of either the Church or the Caſtle, for want of proper repreſentations, had neglected doing; and the pariſh, which conſiſted only of the villages of St. Siffrid and Strathener, were unable from their poverty, and indeed unuſed, to contribute to it; whilſt the L'Eſterlings, the pious and munificent lords of St. Siffrid, took the whole expence of its repairs and decorations upon themſelves.

Whilſt Carloville ſtrolled round the Church and examined its mouldering ſtructure, its fretted ceiling defective from time, and partly concealed by the ivy which crept through the windows in thoſe places where the emblazoned arms had deſerted their high poſts, affording an almoſt inacceſſible refuge to birds, and a moſt ſtriking example of the poverty and emptineſs of the higheſt pitch of human grandeur;—when he turned towards the tomb of Sir Roger, who had taken ſuch delight in thoſe eſcutcheons, and the domain that deſcended to him

through ſo many anceſtors, and but faintly, in contemplating the marble that repreſented him, retraced thoſe features once animated by beneficence though tinctured with enthuſiaſm ;—ſomething like conſcience occaſioned an emotion of remorſe he never before experienced ; a cold chilline ſs came over him ; his teeth knocked together ; and, with a horrid glare, he ſtood with his eyes fixed upon the calm and peaceful countenance of the father of the injured Ethelreda, till he could no longer ſupport himſelf, and fell upon his knees upon the upper ſtep of the chancel His head ſtruck upon the rail of the communion table ; the blow partly ſtunned him, but the pain had diſpelled the horrors of his mind. He attempted to riſe ; the ſtep on which he knelt had been broken by the falling of ſome of the ſtone-work from the roof; it moved as he moved: he looked down, and diſcovered amongſt its fragments a ring—the very ring with which he had married Ethelreda ! for on the inſide were his own initials.

In a moment the youthful and innocent Ethelreda preſented herſelf to his recollection in all her faſcinating beauty and attractions, to which his avenging conſcience failed not to add the injuries and irretrievable misfortunes he had heaped upon her. The ſcene was become too horrid for his ſenſes to bear : he ſprung upon his feet, and curſed his exiſtence aloud ; he ſtruck his forehead with violence, and, ſearching his pockets for ſome inſtrument of deſtruction, thought only of ending his preſent agonies. Then ruſhing furiouſly out of the Church in order to execute his deſign, not many paces from the church-yard he encountered De Clerac, who with all the joyous hilarity of his nation began to rally him on his haſte and diſtrait air,

air, and to inquire news of Lady Mariamne. The ſound of a human voice preſently relieved Carloville from the torments of the lower world he fancied he had been ſuffering. The name of Lady Mariamne helped to remind him of his actual ſituation, and of the ring which he ſtill held in his hand, the advantages of poſſeſſing which then occurred to him. He ſilently depoſited it in his pocket-book. "It is a temptation of the devil!" thought he, "who would not have dared to aſſiſt me, if any good ſpirit had hopes of my reformation."

"Who is in the Caſtle, De Clerac?" ſaid he, recovering from his reverie, which had afforded the Count ſome room for ſpeculation.

"Caſtlebar, and Fitz-Piers; the others are out fiſhing."

"Let us join them, and play a little before dinner; we ſhall have no time afterwards."

"Allons donc!"

In the breakfaſting-room Carloville found his comrades engaged at piquet. Their game ended, a new party was formed, and all ſat down to caſino; and Carloville, whoſe head was a little relieved from the frightful viſions of remorſe that haunted him, at intervals attended to his game, and came to a decided arrangement of his deſigns on Lady Mariamne.

"Upon my ſoul, it won't do!" cried he, throwing down his cards and ſtarting from his chair.

"Zounds! we had won the game! I have it in my hand!" cried his partner.

"N'importe!" exclaimed De Clerac joyfully: "Nous nous en féliciterons, Monſieur de *Fiz-Pierre*."

"I beg your pardon, Caſtlebar," ſaid Carloville. "I am diſtracted——My wife—It won't do—I cannot forget her!"

"Phoo!" exclaimed Caſtlebar. "Could not you play out the hand for thinking of your wife?"

"To think of her now is all I can do: it is true ſhe hated me; but ſhe is dead, and I forgive her!"

"Dead!!!—" at once repeated the whole group.

"What!" cried Fitz-Piers, "is that lovely creature mortal?" pointing to an admirable portrait of Ethelreda, which hung over the chimney.

"She was indeed a lovely creature!" dolefully echoed Carloville.

"If ſhe be not fair for me,
What care I *how* fair ſhe be?"

ſcornfully repeated the unfeeling Sir Dennis Caſtlebar.

"That fellow's a brute, by Jove!" exclaimed Fitz-Piers. "But," continued he, "ſince I have ſeen that picture, it has always been my wonder how any man could be ſuch a monſter as to deſert ſo exquiſite a creature!"

"How curſedly ſtupid you all ſeem!" ſaid Carloville fretfully. "Have I not told you, when her father died we were left with five hundred pounds, which would not have kept me from ſtarving more than a week?"

"No matter! Had ſhe fallen to my lot, I would have lived upon acorns, rather than have been ſeparated from her!" ſaid Fitz-Piers gravely.

"Morbleu!" ſaid De Clerac.

"You are a romantic aſs, Fitz-Piers!" ſaid Caſtlebar.

"You

"You would have thought the diet but indifferent, Fitz-Piers," ſaid Carloville. "I muſt provide myſelf with mourning though!" after a long pauſe.

"I ſhall ſet off for town to-morrow," rejoined Fitz-Piers. "Can I carry your orders?"

"Oh hang it, Fitz-Piers! you ſhall not leave us. Sir Dennis, Count, try to prevail on him to ſtay till we have had a little ſport: to-morrow we turn out a buck: in the courſe of a week the new beagles will be come down; and Sunday—oh curſe me if you go before Sunday! *I* muſt go to *church*, and you ſhall take the benefit of that ceremony with me!"

"You want nothing then but a hunting-coat?" ſaid Fitz-Piers, with an ironical and contemptuous countenance.

"No ſneering, Fitz! You know I cannot bear it. But if you are determined to go, you ſhall order the *black gear* for me and my houſehold: but remember, 'tis not alone my inky cloak,' good couſin!"

"Nay, let the devil wear black! I'll have a ſuit of ermine!" cried Caſtlebar, with a loud laugh.

Though Fitz-Piers had led a life of diſſipation and thoughtleſſneſs, he could not but feel diſguſt at Carloville's manner, againſt which all feeling and decency revolted. His greateſt misfortune, and in reality his greateſt crime, was his intimacy with Carloville—an intimacy which had ruined his morals, drawn upon him the diſpleaſure of a relation whom he ought to have reſpected, and conſiderably deranged his pecuniary affairs.

And this infatuation proceeded not from any thing captivating Fitz-Piers ſaw in Carloville,

but from their unfortunate relationſhip; which having obliged them to paſs the early part of their lives together, the rooted profligacy of the former had imperceptibly influenced the manners of the latter (who continually perceived his errors without the reſolution to reform them), and had at length grown into habit. But his ſenſe of decency, weakened as it was, was too ſtrong to allow him to join in this new outrage againſt the cuſtoms of the world; he therefore invariably adhered to his determination of departing immediately, though Lord Carloville, who took a kind of pleaſure in his company urged him to ſtay.

CHAP. V.

A rage of pleaſure madden'd every breaſt
Down to the loweſt lees the ferment ran:
Thus Vice the ſtandard rear'd: her arrier-ban
Corruption call'd; and loud ſhe gave the word,
"*Mind, mind yourſelves! Why ſhould the vulgar man,*
"*The lacquey, be more virtuous than his lord?*
"*Enjoy this ſpan of life, 'tis all the gods af-*
"*ford.*"

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

THE houſehold, as is uſually the caſe, was tinctured with the vices of its head. All was profligacy, ſwearing, and extravagance, from the maitre d'hotel down to the helpers in the ſtables.

Winifred

Winifred and Llewellyn, who had no poſt in the ſervice of Lord Carloville, who received no wages, and indeed were only ſuffered to remain at the Caſtle becauſe they were overlooked, and becauſe it was perfectly immaterial, paſſed but unpleaſant lives, expoſed to the ridicule and taunts of ſuch an unprincipled and lawleſs ſet, whoſe manners would have diſgraced a banditti. But in order to eſcape from their inſults, both Llewellyn and Winifred avoided as much as poſſible all intercourſe with them, by retiring to the unfrequented parts of the Caſtle, among which the apartments of the late Sir Roger were now included. In the ſtate drawing-room, which was on the ſame floor, a beam had lately given way, ſo that the whole ſuite was reckoned defective, and conſequently not uſed. When therefore the mourning was diſtributed, they were not even thought of, nor did they pay any belief to the ſervants when they gaily told them, they were in mourning for their miſtreſs.

Winifred and Llewellyn never left the walls of the Caſtle, leſt by the caprice of its lord, or more properly that of his ſervants, they ſhould never find a re-entrance. So that, diſcrediting all they heard, and without any other opportunity of information, had Ethelreda even been deſirous of hearing of what occurrences paſſed in the Caſtle or its neighbourhood, they could not have gratified her, becauſe they could depend upon the ſincerity of their informers.

But this was never the caſe. Ethelreda was uniformly ſilent with regard to the Caſtle, or its vicinity; but always anxious to hear how her two faithful ſervants were accomodated in the family, and ſtudious to conſole and apologize to them for the many inſults they ſubmitted to bear without

without complaining. It was in one of theſe converſations that Ethelreda learned with grief the decaying ſtate of the Caſtle. And though ſhe no longer had any intereſt in its duration, her affection for every ſtone that compoſed its walls was as violent as ever. She felt a ſtrong deſire once more to wander through the ſpacious apartments, to look through the windows towards the ſea, and more than all, to contemplate the portraits of her father and mother; or to aſcend the turret at the end of the gallery and wander amongſt the battlements; to feel the cool breezes from the water, to admire the firmament by night, or to watch the glorious ſun riſing over the towers of Strathener.

Ethelreda took a melancholy pleaſure in repeating this wiſh, though ſhe looked upon it as impracticable. She would ſometimes wander through the dark paſſages of her ſubterraneous territory, and, half timid, half courageous, would almoſt approach the aperture into the library, when ſhe gueſſed the family was retired to reſt: but the chirping of a cricket, or the ruſtling of the wind, would fill her with conſternation, and make her relinquiſh her undertaking with terror and affright. But notwithſtanding the imaginary danger that attended the gratification of this wiſh, which was become ſo dear to her, Ethelreda failed not to repeat the attempt; till, grown bolder and leſs ſubject to be ſcared by the noiſes ſhe conſtantly heard, in the dead midnight ſhe aſcended to the library, furniſhed with a lamp. After many pauſes ſhe ventured to emerge from her cavern, and, precipitately croſſing the room, lifted up the arras, and by a private door immediately let herſelf into the drawing-room.

It preſented the moſt melancholy picture of decay Ethelreda had ever beheld. The gilding of

of the richly-carved chimney-piece was entirely obſcured by duſt: for want of the fires which were conſtantly uſed in Sir Roger's time, the crimſon hangings, before grown black and diſcoloured, were now rotted by the damp, and dropping from the walls on the ſide next the ſea, where, from being the moſt expoſed to the weather, ſeveral panes had fallen out of the windows, affording eaſy acceſs to rain, damp, and dews. The portraits had ſuffered in ſome degree, particularly ſome on wood, whoſe pannels had dropped from their frames and ſhivered into ſplinters, "They were painted by Holbein!" ſaid Ethelreda; then glancing her eyes along the floor, and perceiving its unequal ſurface, "It will laſt, at leaſt, as long as I ſhall!"—ſhe continued, her eyes full of tears. Then haſtily quitting this humiliating ſcene of former grandeur, ſhe advanced to her father's apartment. Here the rooms were in better repair, though they had as long been deſerted: both the portraits and the furniture were in tolerable preſervation, from having been leſs expoſed to the ſtorms of the winter. Ethelreda gazed upon them with melancholy rapture, and could have forgotten that hours paſſed away, and have ſuffered the day-break to ſurpriſe her, had not her declining lamp, faintly dying, obliged her to recollect that it was time to return to her priſon.

It was not without regret that Ethelreda quitted the ſilent but honourable company of her anceſtors, for her more ſolitary cell; not without a fixed reſolution of returning at all opportunities to meditate, and contemplate all that remained of countenances ſo dear to her.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Many are the ſayings of the wiſe
In ancient and in modorn books enroll'd,
Extolling patience as the trueſt fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life;
Conſolatories writ
Lenient of grief and anxious thought.

MILTON.

THE report of Ethelreda's death was preſently circulated without the walls of the Caſtle, and ſpeedily known at Strathener: but received as a report without confirmation by Mrs. Conway, who drew preſages from her hopes rather than her fears.

But when the family at St. Siffrid's made its appearance at Church, the truth was no longer to be doubted. Even Lady Mariamne, who had heard the report, but had received no intimation or viſit from Carloville, was compelled to diſmiſs her diſtruſt when ſhe heard of the mourning, which ſhe condemned as an unmerited mark of reſpect to the memory of her deteſted rival; who, ſhe almoſt lamented, had eſcaped the ignominy with which ſhe had long hoped to ſee her overwhelmed.

At Strathener, the certainty of Ethelreda's death was very differently received by Mrs. Conway, who deplored with many tears her early fate, and anticipated inwardly all the horrors that Conway would, or had perhaps already ſuffered at loſing his moſt diſtant hopes for ever. When ſhe conſidered what agonies of ſorrow he might at that moment be ſuffering, ſhe forgave him all his neglected ſilence, and ardently long-

ed

ed to conſole and ſoothe him under his misfortunes. Lady Octavia could not refrain from expreſſing her ſurpriſe and wonder, without obſerving how much the ſubject diſtreſſed Mrs. Conway. Mr. Conway was uniformly ſilent; nevertheleſs he had already, in idea, availed himſelf of Lady Carloville's deceaſe; ſince he imagined Conway's viſionary marriage, and all the illuſions that had ſo long clouded his intellects, would be at once removed by the well-atteſted ſtory of her death. He therefore concluded it was time to take Mrs. Conway into his councils, in order to give weight and validity to the communications he was in haſte to make to his ſon. It was with mingled grief and aſtoniſhment ſhe heard the account of her ſon's violent illneſs and long confinement, for which Mr. Conway did not pretend to aſſign any motive; nor did ſhe attempt to repreſs the reproaches with which her heart was full, for his having ſuffered her to remain in ignorance of Conway's abode, when he ſtood ſo much in need of her watching and attendance. She did not wait for Mr. Conway to propoſe her departure, but immediately gave orders for a carriage to be got ready, determining to remain ſome time at Frampton Lodge, at leaſt till Conway was able or inclined to return with her to Strathener. She had taken upon herſelf the taſk of communicating to him what had ſo recently happened in the family of Carloville, though ſhe dreaded the effects it might have, from the violence of his paſſions, and the fervor of his attachments.

Mr. Conway, in relating the circumſtances of his ſon's illneſs, had purpoſely omitted that part of it connected with the arreſt and the ſubſequent phrenſy; and leſt Dr. Felton ſhould think proper to be more accurate in his details, Mr. Conway

Conway wrote a note, dictating to him the repreſentation he wiſhed him to make of the ſtate of Conway's health, with ſo many plauſible reaſons for this ſlight deviation from truth as would, he doubted not, have their full weight with the Doctor in quieting any ſcruples he might have at making this concealment from the mother of his patient, becauſe they were intended to operate ſo much to his advantage. The ſervant who was charged with this note had particular directions from his maſter to deliver it to Dr. Felton before Mrs. Conway entered the houſe.

In arriving at Frampton, the firſt object that ſtruck Mrs. Conway's ſight, was Conway himſelf, but ſo changed as ſcarcely to preſerve more than the traces of his former countenance. He was without a hat, and, notwithſtanding the ſun ſhone with extreme heat and brightneſs, he ſtood leaning with both arms upon the gate, looking ſtraight forwards without appearing to ſee the carriage which was approaching: his hair was quite without powder, and ſo unuſed to dreſſing, that it had returned to its original wave; his complexion ſun-burnt; and his eyes, though ſtill the ſame in ſize and colour, had loſt all their ſpirit and much of their intelligence. The carriage ſtopped cloſe to the gate: a ſervant advanced to open it. Mrs. Conway, whoſe unpleaſant thoughts had prevented her from obſerving what was paſſing, now looked towards the gate, and, altered and neglected as his perſon was, immediately recogniſed her ſon. "Henry!—my dear Henry!"—cried ſhe mournfully.

"My mother?"—exclaimed Conway, ſcarcely lifting up his head ſo as to ſee through his long eyelaſhes,—"Yes!—it is my mother herſelf!"

—advancing

—advancing towards the carriage and aſſiſting her to alight, whilſt in her impatience ſhe had opened the door.

" Oh, Henry! my dear Henry! you are very ill?—You are not recovered?—You do not ſeem glad to ſee me?"

" I cannot ſeem glad even to ſee you," ſaid Conway, taking his mother's hand. " I wiſh I could forgive you, madam: I wiſh I could forget your unkindneſs," added he after a pauſe.

" Do not upbraid me, Harry;—it is true I have deſerted you, I have left you to ſtrangers in a dangerous illneſs:—it was not intentionally, yet at this moment how much do I ſuffer at ſeeing you!—I ſhudder at the miſeries I have but half eſcaped!"

" And I," cried Conway, " have no way of eſcaping from mine!—Yes, one way!" he added in a low tone.

" For my ſake exert yourſelf! *But* for my ſake, my dear Conway!"

" But for you!—but for you I ſhould have ſeen her once more!" ſaid he in a frightful tone. " I ſhould have heard her laſt words—ſhe would have tried to conſole me—ſhe would have told me her laſt wiſhes, and in ſacredly fulfilling them I ſhould have found ſome alleviation of our misfortunes:—but we are parted—ſeparated—torn aſunder, never to meet again!"

" It is too true!" ſaid Mrs. Conway, whoſe tears choked her utterance, partly for Ethelreda, but more for the agony ſhe ſaw her ſon ſuffering. " If you give way to this deſpair, you will kill me, Henry," ſaid ſhe, as he walked on at a quick pace; not appearing to liſten to any thing ſhe ſaid. " For Heaven's ſake, let me ſpeak to you!" cried ſhe, obſerving he walked towards

towards a ſtream that ran through the lawn which led to the houſe—" I would talk to you of Mrs. Carloville—of Ethelreda !"

There was a charm in the name that had not yet loſt its effect. Conway ſlowly returned; Mrs. Conway eagerly caught his arm.

" Whither were you going ?" ſaid ſhe.

" I was going to walk."

" And to leave me—I, who have not ſeen you ſo long ?"

" Forgive me, my dear mother !" cried he, haſtily; " I will not leave you—at leaſt, not to-day—But you ſaid ſomething of Ethelreda ?"

" Be calm, my dear Harry—When did you ſee her laſt ?"

" Don't—don't aſk me !" cried he, relapſing into phrenſy—" I ſhall be mad—I am raving—!"

" Oh, Conway !—were you then with her in her laſt moments ?—You have ſeen her then in the agonies of death, and the dreadful ſcene has turned your brain !"

" What death ?—What agonies ?" repeated Conway, with a ſtupid kind of calmneſs.

Mrs. Conway was ſilent: ſhe ſcarcely knew herſelf what ſhe had been ſaying: ſhe knew not whether the recital ſhe had to make, would calm or provoke his paſſion; and whilſt ſhe was debating in the moſt dreadful irreſolution, what meaſures were beſt to be adopted in order to reſtore Conway in ſome degree to reaſon and reſignation, they reached the entrance. Conway accompanied his mother to the door of the hall, and, with ſome remains of thoſe poliſhed manners that had once ſo much diſtinguiſhed him, entreated ſhe would pardon his abſence an hour or two.

There

There was ſomething in Conway's tone, though extremely compoſed, that almoſt took away her ſenſes; ſhe looked ſteadfaſtly at him; all the emotion and wildneſs of his countenance had given place to the moſt uninformed vacancy; "You ſhall not leave me!" cried Mrs. Conway, graſping his arm with both her hands.

"Excuſe me! I muſt go. I have an engagement," ſaid he, trying gently to releaſe himſelf; "I will certainly return—before ſupper, perhaps—to-night at all events you will ſee me again."

Mrs. Conway half ſhrieked with terror; his manner ſeemed to indicate ſome deſperate meaning ſhe dared not ſuffer herſelf to penetrate; ſhe tried to ſpeak, but could not find words. "Ethelreda!" was the only ſound ſhe could utter.

"I underſtand you," ſaid Conway, in the ſame tone of compoſure. "She is dead. I will not oblige you to reproach her memory for my diſtraction and extravagance—diſpoſe of me as you pleaſe; but do not attempt to conſole me, or torment me with thoſe fooliſh words, reaſon and fortitude."—Conway led the way towards a parlour; Mrs. Conway followed, and ſilently and ſorrowfully walked to a window, though, blinded by her tears, ſhe could diſcern no object through it. Conway threw himſelf upon a ſopha, and, leaning his head upon his hand, betrayed no traces of emotion, uneaſineſs or ſorrow. Indeed, ſo totally was he abſorbed in his own wretchedneſs, that it is doubtful whether he ſufficiently retained his faculties to be conſcious of feeling any.

It was not long before Dr. Felton made his appearance, and, addreſſing Mrs. Conway with his

his uſual mild and benevolent manner, at once engaged her eſteem, and by degrees diverted her grief. She related to him, as far as ſhe had been made acquainted, every thing of Conway's attachment to Mrs. Carloville except her name, though of her own ſhe made no ſecret, or of the deſigns of Mr. Conway or his family. Dr. Felton, who for the firſt time underſtood the degree of relationſhip in which his patient ſtood to the perſon who had made him ſo many viſits (for, from the ſhyneſs and delicacy of his diſpoſition, he had never enquired even of Conway), was too diſcreet not to attend to the written inſtructions he had received, or to mention any of the oppreſſive meaſures that had been uſed towards Conway, and in ſome degree contributed towards his preſent deſpondency. After much perſuaſion, Mrs. Conway was prevailed on by the Doctor to retire and take ſome reſt after her fatigues, who promiſed to remain with his patient, and, if poſſible, induce him to take ſome repoſe to allay the fever of his mind and recruit his exhauſted ſpirits. Doctor Felton had had too many proofs of the inefficacy of the undertaking, to hope much from his own oratory on his patient's diſorder; but he was one of thoſe who are not eaſily weared in well-doing. He thought it was his duty to exhort Conway to a more reſigned and chriſtian temper, and to bear his misfortunes more ſubmiſſively. But he might have beſtowed his exhortations on the winds, or have preached to the ſtones: for a long time he could obtain no other anſwer than prayers and entreaties to be left alone, or at leaſt in ſilence; and at other threats of eſcaping from his harangues and taking up his abode in the fields—a threat there was ſome riſque

of his executing, had not bodily weakneſs rendered him leſs turbulent in reality than in intention. When words failed, with ſtill leſs hope of ſucceſs the Doctor had recourſe to preſcriptions; he entreated him in the moſt affectionate manner to take an opiate he had prepared for him.

"I care not how ſoon I ſleep—" ſaid Conway: "but it ſhall not be to wake again."

"I do not ſo much blame cowardice in bearing pain," ſaid Dr. Felton with ſomewhat leſs than his uſual mildneſs, "as that ſelfiſhneſs in misfortunes which makes men forget thoſe who ſuffer in their ſufferings; that is cowardice which makes men impious in adverſity."

"A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miſerable—only from wearineſs of doing the ſame things over and over again—and I—" continued Conway—"I, who have not one ſingle ſolace, or inducement to the love of life——"

"Ah, my dear friend!" cried the Doctor, "do not let Seneca's having written that ſentence induce you to repeat it. It is true, a mind fixed and bent on good and celeſtial things, ſteals gradually from the fear of death; but ſhall you dare to juſtify yourſelf in withdrawing from adverſity, and in preparing for yourſelf unknown puniſhments in a world to come, becauſe you will not bear the diſappointments allotted to you in this—the loſs of an idol of your own making? And amongſt your forgotten inducements to exert your reaſon, and cheriſh the love of life, do you include your parents, whoſe only child you are?—Do you forget your mother's life depends on yours?"

"You may try to convince my reaſon!" cried Conway, impatiently; "but you cannot conquer

conquer my deſpair by arguments. Revenge triumphs over death; love ſlights it; honour courts it; fear anticipates it; grief flies to it!"

"It is impoſſible to pervert the ſenſe of the moſt moral writers, as you have now. But what an exalted ſpeech is that of the Stoic whom you juſt quoted! 'That the good things which belong to proſperity are to be wiſhed, but the good things which belong to adverſity are to be admired.' And how much more glorious is it to bear adverſity, than to ſink under it! Fortitude is the principal virtue of adverſity; and adverſity is amongſt the beatitudes——"

"I cannot bear the word," cried Conway, impatiently. "Fortitude!—that moſt chimerical of all virtues!"

"I wiſh," ſaid the Doctor mildly, "you would be patient, and ſuffer me to convince you, that I myſelf, am an example of its efficacy, joined to the ſtrongeſt of all the ſupports the goodneſs of Providence can beſtow—a ſtrong ſenſe of religion.—It is true, I impoſe the moſt painful recollections on myſelf, by recapitulating what I have ſuffered in the misfortunes of thoſe with whom I was moſt intimately connected, and for whom I have always felt the ſtrongeſt affections my heart is capable of feeling! Judge of thoſe then, when I tell you I had a nephew of nearly my own age, for whoſe ſake I never married, becauſe, though he formed a connection I diſliked, I feared his circumſtances would not be equal to his manner of living. In order more effectually to ſerve him, I took to the ſtudy of a profeſſion in which I had not been educated, and went to the Weſt Indies to practice

tice it, and to ſuperintend my eſtate for the ſame reaſons: nothing but his intereſt could ever have induced me to leave him, for even now I cannot remember calmly the trouble of ſeparating. Perhaps it ſeems the more bitter to me," continued the Doctor, with tears in his eyes, "becauſe it was a final one; for he died whilſt I was in Antigua, leaving a ſon two years old, a daughter but a few months, and a wife in a conſumption. In a very ſhort time the care of the whole family devolved on me. I hope—I believe I diſcharged my truſt whilſt they were under my care; but, how many reproaches—how much grief, perhaps all, might I have been ſpared, had I never conſented to part with them! But their father had a married ſiſter, whoſe ſituation and character in life made her certainly in all appearance a more eligible perſon to bring up a girl, than a ſingle man of retired habits and but little experience. The boy was ſent to Elton, and afterwards to a univerſity; ſuch was the plan of education laid down for him by his father: I do not therefore blame myſelf for his vices, ſo much as the example to which he has been unavoidably expoſed; and to new-mould a diſſipated temper, all the preachings of an old man are ineffectual.

"But my dear Ellen!—She would have been ſafe with me, ſhe would have learned to diſtinguiſh the libertines and empty coxcombs of the age, ſhe would have deſpiſed them and eſcaped their ſnares, had ſhe been expoſed to any. Oh! It was this deepeſt of misfortunes that called forth the principles of religion and fortitude to ſave me from deeds of deſperation—at firſt without the excuſe of madneſs; but when the ſearch grew more hopeleſs, when I only cloſed my eyes to ſee my beloved friend and hear him

aſk

aſk for his daughter—when I only woke to feel the full extent of my calamity, to deplore the truſt which I appeared to have neglected, and to be convinced it was irretrievable—it was then my ſenſes began to fail! I perceived it myſelf. I beſought thoſe about me to ſecure my perſon, that I might not do myſelf a violence; for in the height of my phrenſy I depended on ſeeing my beloved Ellen again. I vainly hoped, out of humanity to me ſhe would attempt to ſee me and juſtify herſelf—and I was pre-determined to believe her ſtory—But, alas! that day of conſolation never came!

My delirium was but temporary. When I was allowed the uſe of books, the bible was my beſt phyſician; it has taught me to find out a pleaſure that nothing can rob me of—that of doing good to others."

"I would to heaven I could find your Ellen!" cried Conway, in an animated tone; forgetting for a moment, with all the native generoſity of his character, his own grief in that of his afflicted and benevolent friend. "Did you never hear of her?"

"Never!" ſaid the Doctor, obſerving with pleaſure the effect of his recital. "Never!"—from the hour ſhe left her home to the preſent moment!—It is too myſterious to think of patiently—But ſhe is dead! She is certainly dead! It is now ſeven years ſince that fatal Chriſtmas day when her couſins and her brother waited in the hall to ſee her. But ſhe never came! It was an unfortunate family—unfortunate in all its branches."

There was ſomething ſimilar in the ſtory to Conway's own; he fell into a deep and gloomy muſing. The Doctor could ſcarcely exert himſelf to draw him out of it by converſation. It was

was not long however before he perceived at leaſt one good effect from his benevolently intended recital, which he had made with ſo much pain to himſelf: if his arguments had not convinced, they had wearied his patient, for he perceived he was fallen into a kind of ſlumber, than which nothing could be more conducive to his bodily re-eſtabliſhment; and when once that could be brought to a ſtate of convaleſcence, the health of the mind, he doubted not, would improve in proportion.

CHAP. VII.

Thou ſee'ſt we are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and univerſal theatre
Preſents more woeful pageants than the ſcene
Wherein we play.

SHARESPEARE.

WHETHER or not the Doctor's arguments, had had any real good effect on Conway's grief, his mother was ſurpriſed at the alteration of his manners when ſhe met him in the morning. It is true, his countenance was the ſame; but he no longer endured their remonſtrances and conſolations with frantic extravagance, nor did he give way to a ſullenneſs and ſilence ſtill more alarming. He endeavoured to reply to their queſtions, though in incoherent ſentences; he tried to anſwer their arguments, and even to ſmile at the folly and want

of connection in his own: nor did he contradict the Doctor, whoſe exultation in his amendment for once made him take the whole merit to himſelf, and, contrary to his uſual diffident manner, inſtead of evading Mrs. Conway's thanks and grateful acknowledgements, to receive and liſten to them with extreme pleaſure.

Notwithſtanding the inward feelings of Conway's heart were as acute as ever, he could not help perceiving the obligations he was under to his kind phyſician for having made ſo painful an effort to conſole his afflictions and combat his deſpair. It was therefore partly out of gratitude, and to ſpare him the pain of perceiving the inefficacy of his attempts, that Conway put a conſtraint on himſelf, whilſt his ſoul was torn with a thouſand emotions; and partly to deceive his mother, whoſe anxiety and terror he read in her countenance; but ſtill more, to impoſe on them an idea of his calmneſs, that he might eſcape from their watchful obſervation without raiſing their diſtruſt, and in ſolitude give himſelf up to the exceſſes of his grief, that ſtill knew no bounds, and turned from ſociety and the ſound of conſolation with diſguſt and abhorrence. This ſtratagem ſucceeded. Neither Mrs. Conway nor the Doctor ſuſpected the ſpeciouſneſs of his appearance: they applauded and congratulated him on the power of his reaſon and his exertion of it; whilſt Conway, ſickening at the ſound of their voices, to which he dared not but liſten, would ſeize the firſt opportunity of flying to ſolitude, where he would give himſelf up to all the extravagance of diſtraction, and, ſhutting out all external objects and ideas, would brood inwardly upon his own miſery, till ſome meſſenger from the houſe

obliged

obliged him to return and practice the appearance of tranquility, ten times more torturing than the moſt unbounded indulgence of ſorrow.

From time to time Mrs. Conway diſpatched meſſengers to Strathener with accounts rather ſatisfactory than otherwiſe, from which Mr. Conway drew good preſages of the ſucceſs of his ſchemes; and, judging from the hopes to which in her letters Mrs. Conway gave way, that his ſon was ſufficiently recovered (though but three weeks ſince ſhe had been at Frampton) to hear patiently of Octavia, he determined not to delay much longer a converſation on the ſubject—though he by no means thought it expedient to employ Mrs. Conway in the negociation, becauſe he knew her tenderneſs would not permit her to enforce his arguments, when ſhe perceived the reluctance of Conway. The buſineſs in every ſtage was perplexing: he did not wiſh to recall Mrs. Conway, and ſcarcely dared to leave Octavia a moment, the ſincerity of whoſe promiſes he ſtrongly ſuſpected; not doubting, ſhould ſhe contrive to make any explanations with the Count de Cleric-Auxerre, but ſhe would avail herſelf of his abſence to realiſe her firſt intentions; to which the pleaſure of deſtroying his would, he very well knew, be no inconſiderable inducement. But floating as he was in irreſolution, he did not ſuffer himſelf to be ſurpriſed into a leſs vigilant attention to his neice, to whoſe arts he did no more than juſtice in ſuppoſing her capable of deceiving a ſtricter Argus than himſelf.

CHAP. VIII.

Thou'rt a woman, a true copy of the firſt,
In whom the race of all mankind were curſ'd.
Your ſex by beauty was to heav'n ally'd,
But your great lord, the devil, taught you pride;
He too an angel till he durſt rebel;
And you are ſure the ſtars that with him fell.

OTWAY.

THE family at St. Siffrid's had no ſooner performed the farce of going to church in mourning, than Carloville, impatient to purſue his hitherto ſucceſsful plot, haſtened to pay a viſit at Caſino Belvidere.

Lady Mariamne alone received him: but with leſs rapture than he expected from his ſable appearance, which in reality was all that diſpleaſed her.

"I cannot perceive the neceſſity of your wearing mourning," ſaid ſhe angrily: "it was a compliment that woman by no means deſerved."

"It is not out of compliment to her that I wear it, but decency—the cuſtoms of the world."

"Nonſenſe! The cuſtoms of the world! You ought to have been ſuperior to them: the world would eaſily have forgiven any failure of reſpect to a perſon whom all the world hated. Beſides, it was a compliment *I* expected."

"My

"My dear Lady Mariamne, you ſeem to miſtake the motive. Unleſs I had worn this hypocritical dreſs, I ſhould have taken all the confirmation from the fact it now receives; at leaſt people would have doubted—it would have been gueſſed there was ſome motive for concealment—enquiries would have been made, the wretchedneſs of her ſituation would have been diſcovered, and then to all intents and purpoſes the pity and compaſſion would have fallen to her lot, and you and I muſt have taken up with the odium."

"True," ſaid Lady Mariamne, recollecting herſelf. "But you tell me nothing in detail: who gave you the information of her death? and how did you hear of her wretchedneſs? In fact, what proofs have you that ſhe is dead? that it is not a ſtratagem to deceive you into ſome error that may leave you open to the law? I confeſs I cannot be without ſuſpicions, becauſe I know her capable of ſuch malignancy."

Carloville half ſmiled: "There is a great deal of colour for all this diſtruſt; but I believe you will ſcarcely be leſs credulous than I am on the ſubject; yet *I* am thoroughly convinced, though I have but this one evidence," ſaid he, taking a ſmall bit of paper from his pocket-book, ragged, dirty, and ill written, and preſenting it to Lady Mariamne.

Her ladyſhip with a ſcornful eye and diſtended noſtril, as if the effluva had been diſagreeable to her, only touched it with the extreme points of her fingers. "The late Lady Carloville, it muſt be confeſſed, wrote a good hand!" ſaid ſhe, glancing her eyes over the paper: "but it baffles my ſkill! I muſt trouble you to read it."

Carloville, unfolding the paper, took out a ring, and read:

"HONOURED SIR,

"Pleaſe to pardon my boldneſs in addreſſing your lordſhip, becauſe I do not do it from my own preſumption, but my miſtreſs's orders, who died laſt night. The incloſed ring I took from her finger after ſhe was dead, as ſhe commanded me to do, and here incloſe it to your lordſhip; and to ſay it was the firſt time it had ever been off her finger ſince you put it on. I hope your lordſhip will not refuſe to ſend ſomething to bury her ladyſhip, as ſhe has left nothing of value, and it muſt otherwiſe be done by the pariſh.

"Pray, your lordſhip, do not take it amiſs, the liberty of informing you that my Lady hired me in London under the name of Mrs. Winſtone, and that half a year's wages are due, which I leave to your lordſhip's generoſity to ſettle; humbly adding, I have been a faithful ſervant to her ladyſhip in all her diſtreſs and ſickneſs.

"I am, with many prayers to your lordſhip to forgive this liberty,

"Your lordſhip's moſt obedient,

"humble ſervant, &c.

"S. ELLIS."

Carloville, having ſhown Lady Mariamne the ring, and made her obſerve the letters which proved to him its identity, carefully replaced both that and the letter in his pocket-book.

"Well!" ſaid Lady Mariamne, after a ſhort ſilence, "ſhe is certainly dead then?"

"Certainly

"Certainly. I had yeſterday an account of her funeral; ſhe was interred yeſterday or Saturday, I forget which; at leaſt my meſſenger, who is returned, told me it was ſo intended."

"Pray—you have not yet told me where all this happened? in England or Wales?"

"In—Somerſetſhire. I will own to you, I have long known her abode; that I have even tried to negociate with her by letter; but I have always found her ſo firm in maintaining her own innocence and the purity of her life, that I cared not to communicate to you what I knew would afflict you: in ſhort, that I was hopeleſs of obtaining a legal ſeparation. But I was determined to aſcertain this *laſt* piece of intelligence by the corroboration of a witneſs whom I could depend upon: therefore, inſtead of ſending my remittances for the funeral by the mail, I diſpatched a meſſenger with orders fully to inform himſelf of the truth of all I have been relating, and even to ſee the body. He however only ſaw the coffin, becauſe the lid was cloſed. The inſcription he copied from the plate was ſimply, 'Ethelreda L'Eſterling, in the twenty-firſt year of her age. Deſcended from the baronets of that name, of St. Siffrid's Caſtle.' This laſt circumſtance," continued Carloville, "was the moſt convincing to me, becauſe I recognize in it all that family pride and romance, the characteriſtic of herſelf and her relations." He added, "ſhe deſired to be buried in the church-yard of a ſmall village near which ſhe reſided, without ſtone or inſcription to mark the ſpot."

"What an exceſs of pride! Yet what affectation of humility!" exclaimed Lady Ma-

riamne. "Yes, yes! theſe are ſufficient at any time to identify her."

"I think," ſaid Carloville, pauſing, "in order to prevent the Harwoods from troubling us—as they moſt aſſuredly will, if they ſuſpect their ſiſter has been in diſtreſſed circumſtances through my means—I think it will be expedient to put a ſcheme in practice that has already occurred to me, which ſhall make it appear to them ſhe has hitherto evaded me; and, inſtead of dying in Somerſetſhire, that ſhe has reſided in one of the catholic cantons of Switzerland under a feigned name; where, as heretics are buried with very little ceremony, it will be utterly impoſſible for them ever to detect the impoſition. Do you approve?"

Before Lady Mariamne could give her aſſent, Sir Francis entered the room and put an end to the converſation. In a few minutes Lady Mariamne retired, and left the gentlemen together.

"Pray, my lord," ſaid Sir Francis, after a little heſitation—"do you think—I confeſs it is an odd queſtion—do you think there will be any impropriety in my keeping the meeting of Cambrian Archers, as I at firſt intended, with your permiſſion, in St. Siffrid's park?—I rather think, as it is an *annual* thing, and not a feſtival accidentally appointed, that there can be no objection—as in the latter caſe I ſhould certainly poſtpone it."

"You muſt excuſe me, Sir Francis: I am not a proper perſon to appeal to. Naturally wiſhing, as I do, to pay every reſpect to the memory of Sir Roger L'Eſterling and his family, I may perhaps be over-ſcrupulous: but, at all events, the park is at your ſervice, and, I need

need not add, every accommodation of the Caſtle."

Sir Francis made his polite tenant, who hitherto had lived rent-free, many acknowledgments for his offers of ſervice and accommodation; who having again repeated them, took his leave: at the ſame time Sir Francis redoubled his thanks, aſſuring Lord Carloville he would at ſome future time avail himſelf of the liberty allowed him.

CHAP. IX.

Ce n'eſt donc pas aſſez que ce funeſte jour
A tous ce que j'aimois m'arrache ſans retour
Et que, de mon devoir eſclave infortunée,
A d'éternels ennuis je me voye enchaînée?

RACINE.

FOR another month every thing went on in its uſual train at the different manſions in the neighbourhood. At Caſino Belvedere every ſpare barn was filled with various artificers working under Sir Francis L'Eſterling's directions. He was exhauſting his brains to invent ſomething ſo new, that his ſhooting match would ſurpaſs all thoſe that had preceded it; whilſt Lady Mariamne agreeably ſtimulated him to an exertion of his abilities, by reprobating every project about which he conſulted her.

At St. Siffrid's the ſame riotous party continued its revels: and Fitz-Piers, who had made many good reſolutions in his life and broken them all, was returned to ſpend the autumn with Lord Carloville; ſo that the circle was again complete.

At Strathener the family was enlarged, but not much enlivened, by the arrival of Lord and Lady Caerleon, whoſe ſtock of careleſs dullneſs and inſipidity was ſometimes interrupted by a ſarcaſtic obſervation of one ſpitefully returned by the other. Lord Caerleon particularly ſeemed much altered: he was grown more thoughtful and grave, and ſcarcely any traces of his former foppery remained. With people of judgment, ſuch a change would have been called a reformation: but Lady Caerleon complained that he was grown ſtupid, and, with ſome jealouſy and more folly, inſinuated that it was his ſorrow for the death of Mrs. Carloville; of whoſe diſappearance, which was ſtill a myſtery to the world, ſhe had always entertained ſurmiſes to his lordſhip's prejudice. In reality, the ſuppoſed death of Mrs. Carloville had greatly contributed to this ſtriking change in Lord Caerleon's deportment, and entirely occaſioned his gravity and depreſſion of ſpirits.

It was not till the arrival of her brother and ſiſter, that Mr. Conway thought he could venture to leave Lady Octavia. He knew Lord Caerleon's averſion to her marrying the Count de Clerac-Auxerre was nearly as great as his own: having therefore cautioned him of the Count's being at St. Siffrid's, he mounted his horſe and took the road to Frampton.

Conway, as uſual, was preambulating the country. Trying in the fatigue of exerciſe to forget his torments, and to relieve an intolera-

ble

ble reſtleſſneſs which would not ſuffer him to be ſtill; he had wandered more than five miles from Frampton, and would probably have continued walking till night, had he not encountered Mr. Conway; who no ſooner perceived him than he diſmounted, and, leaving his horſe to a ſervant, joined his ſon on foot. Mr. Conway was not leſs anxious to begin a converſation with him, than Conway was to avoid one. He ſpoke continually on indifferent ſubjects, but found it impoſſible to draw him into diſcourſe—the longeſt of his anſwers ſcarcely amounted to two words, though they betrayed no ſigns of impatience, fretfulneſs, or deſpondency.

Mr. Conway, who ſaw no alteration in his perſon, but rather imagined, from the glow which exerciſe and the ſun had raiſed upon his cheek, his health was mended, as were, he concluded from Mrs. Conway's accounts, his ſpirits, was at a loſs to interpret this more than common taciturnity. To puzzle Mr. Conway, was to enrage him: he began to think Conway had ſome motive for refuſing to converſe with him: he immediately purſued the ſame plan: they both walked on at a quick pace, and performed the laſt four miles of their walk in total ſilence.

When they reached the Lodge, Mr. Conway found himſelf ſo tired with his journey, his anger, and his long walk, that he had no inclination to contend or argue with his ſon; particularly in his preſent humour for uttering none but monoſyllables. Therefore, after a ſhort conference with Mrs. Conway and Dr. Felton, from which he received ſome ſatisfaction, he retired to bed, intending to open his negociations with Conway in the morning.

Accordingly,

Accordingly, the next morning afforded him an opportunity of diſcourſing with his ſon alone. Mrs. Conway had left the breakfaſt-room, and with his favourite ſtudy the Doctor had retired to another; when Conway, ſtarting up at the ſight of a large ſpaniel that always accompanied him, was preparing to begin his rambles.

"I muſt detain you half an hour, Harry," ſaid Mr. Conway.

Conway threw down his hat, and returned.

"Henry!" ſaid Mr. Conway, pauſing and heſitating—"Henry—do you remember our laſt converſation?"

"No," ſaid Conway.

"If I thought you would now oppoſe me, I would not reſume it; but ſurely now, when you *can* have no plea but oppoſition to my will and your mother's—now that Octavia and your uncle, and in ſhort the whole family, are anxious for the connexion, you cannot be ſo headſtrong as to reſiſt their united wiſhes?—You do not anſwer me, Conway, Is your ſilence a token of contempt, or refuſal, or acquieſcence?"

"Neither," ſaid Conway calmly. "I was trying to comprehend what you have been ſaying to me—I confuſe myſelf the more when I attempt to think—it is a faculty I no longer wiſh to poſſeſs—but did you mention my mother? Does my mother join in wiſhing me to marry Octavia?"

"Yes," exclaimed Mr. Conway, rejoiced at the coolneſs and patience of his manner; "I am perſuaded your mother will feel infinite ſatisfaction in your compliance."

"And

"And will my acquieſcence be a gratification to you, ſir, that you cannot diſpenſe with?"

"I cannot expreſs to you," ſaid Mr. Conway, "how much joy it would give me!—It has long been the ſole object and end of all my wiſhes; it would make me happy—Yes, I am perſuaded it would make me happy!"

"We muſt then come to an explanation," ſaid Conway, ſolemnly; "it is neceſſary for all our ſakes that we come to an agreement. Firſt, I would premiſe, it is not my own choice, but yours, that I comply with; and next, that this compliance abſolve me and my memory from all future reproaches, from all obedience, from all duty."

"I ſcarcely comprehend you, Conway. I do not ſee how reproach can poſſibly follow; and as for duty, this is the laſt inſtance in which I expect or aſk it."

"Now then let me ſpeak, but let it be for the laſt time on this ſubject. I conſent, I give my promiſe, to marry Octavia Conway.—But if I have any warning *here*," putting his hand on his heart—"it will be the laſt act of which I ſhall repent in this world—*Hereafter*——"

"You are too ſerious, my dear Harry," ſaid Mr. Conway—"I accept your promiſe, and I anſwer for the conſequences. Now let me thank you——"

"Stop, ſtop, ſir!" cried Conway, precipitately ſnatching up his hat, "do not thank me—you will remember it with horror."—He left the room as he was ſpeaking; Mr. Conway called aloud after him, "Conway! one word more!"

He ſtood a moment.

"Will it be of any material difference to you how ſoon this affair is concluded?"

"I care

"I care not how ſoon," replied he: "henceforth, to-day, and to-morrow, and all days will be alike to me." Conway darted through the hall: his faithful and affectionate Mæra followed him, and both were preſently hidden in the thicket at the end of the lawn.

Conway had no ſooner regained his favourite ſolitude, than, throwing himſelf on the ground, he ran over in his mind the promiſe he had juſt made to his father. It was the firſt ſhadow of conſolation his diſtracted mind had received: hitherto he thought his duty, and the affection he owed his parents, required ſome exertion; but now that both joined to diſtreſs him, by urging him to what he was ſo averſe, in a manner ſo unfeeling and tyrannical, he looked upon himſelf as no longer accountable for their happineſs, ſince they placed it in an act which they knew would aggravate his miſery. It was thus he eagerly graſped at a pretence for giving up himſelf to a deſpairing gloomineſs, which he was conſcious it was criminal not to reſiſt.

Having obtained his ſon's promiſe, Mr. Conway cared not how ſoon he returned to Strathener. It was with equal ſurpriſe Mrs. Conway heard from him the purport, and the ſucceſs of his converſation; but as the event had juſtified the meaſure, ſhe dared not blame the ill-timed precipitancy with which Mr. Conway talked of concluding the marriage. As for the woman he had choſen, though ſhe had long ceaſed to object to her, her ſentiments with reſpect to her manners, her temper, and principles were unalterably the ſame. After the departure of Mr. Conway, ſhe ruminated inceſſantly on the ſtrange turn Conway's temper had ſo ſuddenly taken; it appeared too extraordinary to be true;

it

it puzzled and alarmed her; but having been entreated by Mr. Conway not to lead to any converſation on the ſubject with her ſon, ſhe refrained from queſtioning him, though ſhe was unable to penetrate the meaning of his requeſt.

At his return to Strathener, Mr. Conway delayed not to inform Lord Trecaſtle of his viſit, and partly of the illneſs that had ſo long detained Conway at Frampton Lodge, unknown to his mother and the family at Strathener. He gave favourable accounts of the improving ſtate of his health, and failed not to add, he felt an extreme impatience to come to Strathener; where he hoped to find every preliminary towards his marriage ſettled, and even the day fixed; though his phyſician remonſtrated againſt leaving Frampton till his health was perfectly re-eſtabliſhed. Mr. Conway thought it neceſſary to account for Conway's remaining at Frampton, when ſo many intereſting circumſtances concurred to make his appearance at Strathener almoſt indiſpenſable.

Lord Trecaſtle, who admired his nephew, had always liſtened with pleaſure to Mr. Conway's propoſal of marrying him and Octavia: he was particularly well pleaſed with the renewal of them, at a time when the recent refuſal he had given to the Count de Clerac-Auxerre, made him ſtrongly ſuſpect that his daughter ſtill reſented it; and leſt anger ſhould become downright rebellion, he eagerly concurred with his brother in the expediency of a ſpeedy marriage; very plauſibly concluding, when once Octavia was married to her couſin, not all the foreign Counts in Europe would have it in their power to peſter him with broken Engliſh,

Engliſh, or run away with his daughter againſt his conſent Mr. Conway now informed Lord Trecaſtle of Lady Octavia's previous conſent; and, leaving it to his Lordſhip to fix the day with his daughter, contented himſelf with remarking, he hoped Lady Octavia would not attempt to poſtpone it beyond a fortnight.

The intended marriage, by the preparations that were making, was ſoon known and openly talked of in the family. Lady Octavia, with all poſſible coolneſs, gave herſelf the airs of a looker-on; whenever ſhe was applied to for directions—"Juſt as you pleaſe—It is of no kind of conſequence—Perfectly indifferent—" were her anſwers. Diſſimulating as ſhe was, ſhe would not however have ſeen theſe preparations with ſo much pretended calmneſs, had not her uncle's ſhort abſence given her an opportunity of concerting meaſures with the Count de Clerac, which were to effect a counter-revolution.

The Count appeared exceſſively hurt and mortified at the promiſe ſhe had made to Mr. Conway; proteſted, ſhe meant to deſert him; that nothing ſhould make him reſign ſuch a treaſure as Octavia;—that he would ruſh into the church and carry her off, in ſpite of Conway and her whole family."

Lady Octavia entreated him to be calm, promiſed to mak her eſcape in the night, or throw herſelf from the windows—or come down a rope-ladder, provided he would procure one. The Count was in too much deſpair to believe her.

"How incredulous you are!" ſhe exclaimed; "I promiſe to forfeit to you half my fortune, if I do not marry you."

"Ah,

"Ah, ma belle amie!—What conſolation will half your fortune be to me?"

"It will convince you at leaſt of the ſincerity of my promiſes," ſaid Octavia. She then wrote a promiſſory note for twenty thouſand pounds, which ſhe ſigned, and put into the Count's hand: "You ſee I am in earneſt," added ſhe; "and when I have told you the remainder of my plan, I am ſure you will applaud it. I will contrive to let you know the day; and inſtead of being married at Strathener, I will inſiſt on going to church, and by that means give you an opportunity of forbidding the marriage. I will eaſily make it appear that Conway has cauſed the interruption; the confuſion will conſequently be very great, and I ſhall avail myſelf of it to join you at an appointed place."

The Count applauded the ſcheme highly. Indeed, it carried with it an appearance of ſucceſs that ſeemed to reſtore his ſpirits and confidence to their uſual pitch; and Octavia, perfectly at eaſe as to the event, cared not how ſoon her uncle expoſed himſelf to the diſappointment ſhe had not undeſervedly prepared for him.

CHAP. X.

——Vel quis non vidit vulnera pali,
Quem cavat aſſiduis ſudibus, ſcutoque laceſſit?
JUVENAL.

THOUGH Sir Francis L'Eſterling made a feint of poſtponing the annual ſhooting match, nothing was further from his intentions than to do ſo in reality. And perfectly ſatisfied with the compliment he had paid Lord Carloville in mentioning ſuch an intention, he continued his preparations for the day originally fixed upon. Accordingly great numbers of people of faſhion, as well thoſe who belonged to the ſociety as thoſe who did not, allured by the fineneſs of the day, and the well-known fanciful ſplendour of Sir Francis L'Eſterling's fetes, aſſembled in the park at St. Siffrid's, to amuſe themſelves by looking on, by betting on the candidates for the prizes, or by joining in the evening dance upon the turf. Amongſt them were Lord and Lady Caerleon, and Lady Octavia Conway; neither of whom took any part in the amuſements: but Lady Mariamne particularly diſtinguiſhed herſelf, by carrying away all the fame and the prizes from the other Amazonian ladies on the field.

The next day was that fixed on for the marriage of Conway with his couſin; and Lord Caerleon, whoſe manners towards the Count were ſtudiouſly forbidding, had in all appearance ſo far ſucceeded as to diſcourage, during the amuſements of the morning, every attention

tion on his part to Lady Octavia, who bore her brother's tyranny with the moſt exemplary reſignation, having very adroitly ſlipped a billet into her lover's hand, in which his part in the intended drama was clearly marked.

But Lord Caerleon had ſtill more cogent reaſons for being preſent at this new diſplay of Sir Francis's ill-timed magnificence, with which he was much diſpleaſed, than merely watching his ſiſter Octavia, whoſe conduct, though trifling and ſilly, he had never ſuſpected. It was the more flagrant miſbehaviour which the world now in loud rumours imputed to Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling that had brought him into Wales; and though the ſcandal was ſo cautiouſly whiſpered in the neighbourhood of Strathener and Kilgaren, that neither Sir Francis nor Lord Trecaſtle was as yet alarmed; it had ſpread into Somerſetſhire, where Lord Caerleon and his lady were on a viſit at Orchard Sedgmoor, a ſeat of Lord Beralſton's.

Like moſt men of light morals, Caerleon was particularly jealous of the female honour of his own family; and though half frantic at the poſſibility of finding theſe reports to the prejudice of Lady Mariamne true; yet he had the prudence not to mention even to Lady Caerleon his reaſons for ſo ſuddenly quitting Orchard Sedgmoor, determined at the ſame time to make an example of Carloville, though at the hazard of his life. A very few days ſpent in making obſervations at the different meetings in the neighbourhood, prepoſſeſſed as he was, ſerved to convince him that Lady Mariamne's intimacy with Carloville was injurious to her. But as yet he half flattered himſelf theſe were only the malignant inſinuations of ill-nature, owing to the former ſituation of Carloville in the family; though

though he plainly ſaw with extreme indignation, that inſtead of avoiding all connexion with him, as the family at Strathener had done, he was by far the moſt intimate and familiar viſitor at Caſino Belvedere; and not more exaſperated at his ſiſter's conduct than at Sir Francis's fooliſh ſecurity and blindneſs, he redoubled his vigilance, determining with equal rage and firmneſs that neither of the offenders, if ſuch they were, ſhould eſcape his vengeance. No other conſideration could have induced him to be preſent at the ſhooting-match; and though much circumſpection was neceſſary, he could ſcarcely refrain from mortifying Sir Francis, by expreſſing his abhorrence of the indecorum of making a public entertainment ſo ſoon after the death of a near relation, for whom he was in his firſt mourning.

Poor Sir Francis, doomed by his folly to eternal mortifications, had obſerved the ſulky gloomineſs of Lord Caerleon's countenance, and the coldneſs of his manner whenever he addreſſed him. And indeed, from having always been treated by Lord Trecaſtle as the firſt perſonage in his family, there was ſomething very formidable in Lord Caerleon's anger to every part of it immediately within his ſway, which even extended to Sir Francis, who was thrown into the greateſt perplexity at his conſtrained ſhort anſwers, and at his keeping himſelf with his party ſeparate from the reſt of the company.

At dinner, however, Sir Francis hoped to overcome his ill-humour; and from the projected elegance of the ball, he thought he had enſured his admiration, even to a certainty. Round the largeſt oak in the park was placed a circular table. The branches were decorated with

with wreaths and garlands of flowers; and oppoſite to a trophy of the quiver, bow, and ſilver creſcent, which ſhe had that day gained, ſat Lady Mariamne, and next her, at her expreſs deſire, Lord Carloville.

The table was nearly full, before Sir Francis diſcovered that Lord Caerleon had not taken a place. Neither Lady Mariamne's loud invitation, nor the ſignificant ſmiles of the obſerving crowd at ſeeing Carloville place himſelf at her elbow, had eſcaped him, as he ſtood watching them at a little diſtance: his eyes glittering with paſſion through his black eyelaſhes, partly expreſſed the deſire of revenge that glowed in his heart.

Sir Francis, advancing towards Lady Caerleon, took her hand, and was leading her to a vacant part of the table; but Caerleon, inſtantly ſnatching the other, exclaimed in a tone that reached the ears of many of the company, "No part of *my* family, Sir Francis, over whom I have any authority, ſhall be ſeen in the ſociety of that man;" looking, or rather ſtaring fiercely, at Carloville.

Sir Francis too ſtared, but it was with aſtoniſhment at every one round him, in order to diſcover the ineligible perſon. In return, the whole group exhibited the moſt perplexing variety of different expreſſions of countenance; amongſt which many ſeemed to pronounce Lady Mariamne's confuſion and change of colour, tokens of guilt—and Carloville's undaunted gaiety, a perfect model of aſſumed, unconſcious effrontery. In the mean time, Caerleon's ſociable had driven up; ſo that, when Sir Francis was on the point of begging him to be more explicit, he made him a half inclination

inclination of the head, and immediately drove off towards Strathener.

This moſt untoward caprice of Caerleon, however, operated ſo effectually on Sir Francis, as to deſtroy all the delight he had promiſed himſelf in the feſtival, projected with ſo much labour and at ſo great an expence. He was particularly mortified that Caerleon ſhould appear ſo much irritated without any apparent reaſon; but he was ſtill more grieved that he would not hear the dirge of the Three famous Archers, which he had written and ſet for the occaſion; and which was to be ſung during dinner by three voices, in the hollow of the oak round which they dined; a thought for which he had given himſelf much credit, as quite new and extraordinary, and likely to produce a ſurpriſing effect. The intended decorations for the ball, too, had given him equal pleaſure in idea. But unable to account for Caerleon's expreſſions of diſapprobation and diſguſt, he could think of nothing elſe; and before the company prepared for the dance, he had framed a thouſand ridiculous excuſes of ſudden indiſpoſition, nerves, and palpitations, in order to eſcape to Strathener, and hear at large what had ſo entirely diſcompoſed him.

But ſcarcely was the ſky-coloured awning erected amongſt the trees, and the lamps arranged, when Lord Caerleon made his re-appearance, alone, though palpably not better inclined to be pleaſed than when he ſo pointedly quitted the party at dinner. Lady Mariamne with Carloville for her partner was juſt leading down the dance. Caerleon advanced as nearly oppoſite to the latter as the dancers would permit, and continued to follow him with a ſteady ſcornful ſtare, not unnoticed by his ſiſter, though

though Carloville gave not the leaſt intimation of perceiving the intended offence. But, in all probability, Caerleon would not have deſiſted till he had imprudently forced Carloville to take umbrage at his behaviour, had not his attention been taken off from watching him, by hearing the names of Sir Francis and Lady Mariamne repeatedly echoed, by a party of men who with mirth ſtood watching the dancers.

"C'eſt une femme!" ſaid de Clerac, lowering his voice to a whiſper. "She is an imperious, inſolent woman," ſaid Sir Dennis Caſtlebar: "But ſhe is in good hands; Carloville is up to taming proud ſpirits," he added.

"I wiſh," ſaid Fitz-Piers, "all the diſgrace he is preparing for Sir Francis may recoil on his own head! I have ſworn a hundred times that I would make an acquaintance with Sir Francis, merely to prevail on him to forbid Carloville his houſe."

"I proteſt I do not know which of the three is moſt of a fool!" ſaid Caſtlebar, addreſſing Fitz-Piers. "But here comes Sir Francis. Sir Francis L'Eſterling, Mr. Fitz-Piers deſires to be introduced to you—a couſin of Lord Carloville."

Sir Francis politely aſſured him of his very great eſteem for Lord Carloville and every part of his family, and entreated to have the pleaſure of ſeeing Mr. Fitz-Piers at Caſino Belvedere. He was on the point of adding, that Lady Mariamne herſelf ſhould repeat the invitation, when, perceiving Lord Caerleon, he inſtantly advancing towards him, and expreſſed as much joy at ſeeing him returned, as if he had been on ſome perilous expedition from which he was ſcarcely expected to come back alive.

"Do, my Lord, take the trouble to advance ten ſteps with me, and I will ſhow you the moſt

moſt ſtriking perſpective of the dancers you can poſſibly imagine!" ſaid Sir Francis, miſtaking Lord Caerleon's invincible coldneſs for ſilent admiration. "There!" continued he exultingly, "what idea does all this preſent to your mind? You will confeſs this blue canopy, in appearance ſupported only by theſe balloon figures repreſenting the Winds, is a light airy thought? Look at Eurus and Auſter; do they not remind you of thoſe figures on the Tower of the Winds at Athens? They were made under my directions, from drawings of my taking. Thoſe are Veſtals carrying lamps; Cupids and Hymens with lighted torches; they float over the dancers from the air they make in moving; they have the lightneſs and effect I expected. But liſten a moment to the muſic; does it ſeem in the air, or underground? You do not gueſs. Well then, the muſicians are diſpoſed of in each of thoſe trees, which in reality ſupport the four corners of the canopy. I wiſh you would tell me, if you could have ſuggeſted any improvement."

"I!" exclaimed Caerleon, his eyes ſtill fixed on Carloville and his ſiſter. Yes, I wiſh you would procure Lady Mariamne ſome other partner."

"Oh! She always chooſes for herſelf; but I will introduce Mr. Fitz-Piers preſently. But do not theſe decorations give you any particular idea? I myſelf think that nothing is wanting but the river Peneus, to make it a perfect repreſentation of the Theſſalian Tempe." Sir Francis was about to apply to Caerleon again for his opinion: but he, diſguſted with ſuch trifling folly, had unceremoniouſly left him, and reſumed his ſtation as near his ſiſter as he could: and Sir Francis, perceiving his neareſt

auditors

auditors were his friends Eurus and Auſter, provided himſelf with a partner, and took his place in the dance not far from Lady Mariamne.

Lord Caerleon's unremitted watching had not been loſt upon her; and in his looks, diſpleaſed and angry, ſhe perceived ſome mortification was preparing for her, which her conſcience told her ſhe deſerved. When Sir Francis ſtood up, ſhe was glad of a pretence for diſengaging herſelf from her partner, becauſe Carloville, to whom ſhe was fearful of hinting Caerleon's palpable diſlike, grew ſtill more aſſiduous in his attentions. She, therefore, in approaching Sir Francis, very dexterouſly contrived to entangle ſome part of her dreſs in the buttons of his coat, and then, laying all the blame on his awkwardneſs, declined dancing any more; ſaying, as ſhe left the ſet, "Sir Francis's manner of dancing was ſo very *hoſtile*, that ſhe could not run the riſk of encountering him again." She then took a ſeat next her brother, and, notwithſtanding his repelling manners, entered into converſation with him upon indifferent ſubjects all the remainder of the evening; whilſt he, debating whether he ſhould repreſent to her, or to Sir Francis, the neceſſity of giving up Carloville's acquaintance, was in hopes and half inclined to believe that he was the more blameable of the two in not perceiving the ſtrong impropriety, and even the impeachment he muſt have drawn upon his credit in the opinions of all men of honour, by continuing to notice a man who had formerly behaved in ſo flagrant a manner to his relation.

The company prepared to ſeparate before Lord Caerleon came to any reſolution; and having left Lady Mariamne with Sir Francis,

he returned to Strathener, partly determined his father's command ſhould ſanction the authority that was to expel Carloville from his ſiſter's ſociety.

CHAP. XI.

———Let none admire
That riches grow in hell; that ſoil may beſt
Deſerve the precious bane.

MILTON.

NOTWITHSTANDING his manner of bearing it, Caerleon's obſervations had not eſcaped Lord Carloville's notice. He perceived his ſchemes were drawing to a criſis, which in ſome meaſure was haſtened by the ſcrutiniſing watchfulneſs of Caerleon, though meant to have a contrary effect. Carloville ſaw that, to ſucceed in his plans, not the ſmalleſt delay was allowed him; that he muſt ſeize the preſent moment, and that even another day might derange them beyond all poſſibility of retrieval.

Covetous, profligate, and unprincipled, he had always beheld with an eye of envy the large eſtate of Sir Francis L'Eſterling; part of which he once looked upon as his own. He knew too, that provided Sir Francis died without heirs it reverted to Sir Roger L'Eſterling's female deſcendants. When firſt Sir Francis married

married Lady Mariamne Conway, there appeared no probable chance of his ever poſſeſſing any part of it; but as yet they had no family. Not only report but obſervation pronounced them unhappy; and upon a nearer intimacy with the family, Carloville perceived he might turn their diſcord, and the reviving partiality of Lady Mariamne, to his own advantage. He had every reaſon to believe he could prevail on the lady to deſert Sir Francis in hopes of his marrying her himſelf. It was in order to favour more effectually this infatuation, and give the colour of poſſibility to the performance of his promiſe, that he ſpared no trouble to convince her of the death of Ethelreda. Having in his own mind, therefore, effectually ſeparated them, it was by no means his intention to go farther than promiſes. The Conway family, he did not doubt, would make every exertion to prevent a divorce; and he thought himſelf ſure that Sir Francis would be governed by them in every thing, except taking back his plague when he had once fairly got rid of her. It was then his intention to diſcover Ethelreda, whom he ſuſpected of having taken refuge with the Harwoods; to ſecure her perſon, and keep her concealed till the death of Sir Francis—which event his lawleſs viſions placed at no great diſtance, from the apparent delicacy of his conſtitution. Then would be the moment to produce to the world the unfortunate daughter of Sir Roger L'Eſterling, and in her right, as co-heireſs with her ſiſter, to take poſſeſſion of half the eſtate. About the preſent belief of her death he gave himſelf no trouble, as his conduct would eaſily make that paſs for a ſtratagem of her own.

It is difficult to pronounce, whether folly or wickedneſs were moſt predominant in theſe infamous plans; but hitherto Carloville had been ſucceſsful in all his villanies, and encouraged to proceed by the moſt enſnaring and blind ſecurity. Fearing no laws but penal ones; without any remains of honour, or ſentiment of remorſe; equally dead to conſcience as he was unfeeling; and a prey to the moſt inſatiable rapacity; he looked forward to the accompliſhment of every wiſh, without the ſhadow of a ſcruple at trampling on all order, and diſſolving the moſt ſacred ties of ſociety. Thus abandoned by all ſenſe of decency and virtue, he required but little conſideration to reſolve on the moſt atrocious meaſures. It appeared to him the moſt eligible plan he could adopt, to prevail on Lady Mariamne to elope with him before morning; and in order more effectually to execute his purpoſe, he intended to propoſe to Sir Francis and her Ladyſhip, taking up their abode that night at the Caſtle.

Sir Francis peremptorily declined accepting the invitation; for which Carloville was prepared, as Sir Francis's averſion was extremely well known to him. But Lady Mariamne, who had more than half acquieſced in all his plans, as peremptorily declared it was an accommodation ſhe could by no means forego; pretending ſhe was ſo much fatigued with dancing, and the numerous robuſt exerciſes of the day, that to ride twenty miles before ſhe repoſed would endanger her life. Nor would ſhe hear of going to Strathener, though no objection could be made to its diſtance. Nothing that Sir Francis could ſay ever had any weight with Lady Mariamne; nor could he have ſtimulated her to ſtay more certainly, than by entreating her

her not to do it. She openly ſcoffed at his pretending to judge of the impropriety of the action, and obſtinately perſiſted in not going farther than St. Siffrid's.

On the other hand, Carloville repreſented that nothing could be more abſurd than returning to Caſino Belvedere; that ſeveral ladies were to honour him by taking beds that night at the Caſtle; that every accomomdation it afforded, had been prepared for the reception of his expected gueſts; and the beſt apartment on the ſouth ſide had been particularly allotted for the uſe of Sir Francis and Lady Mariamne.

This was in reality the caſe: for Carloville would not have been much diſtreſſed if his gueſts had deſcended through the flooring, and by that means ſpared him the trouble of going through with his plans; though, to ſay the truth, he had not the remoteſt idea of ſuch a cataſtrophe. But Sir Francis, at the bare mention of the ſouth apartments, exclaimed in horror, he would not ſleep there for the univerſe; and proteſting Lady Mariamne was her own miſtreſs, he ſtaid not only till he had conducted her, accompanied by Carloville, to the Caſtle gates; and departed alone, troubled at her obſtinacy and unpliable temper, and perplexed at the conſtruction he was conſcious the Strathener family would put on *his* conduct as well as her's.

CHAP. XII.

If ſpirits can aſſume both form and ſuit,
You come to fright us.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILST the appearance of feſtivity and rejoicing once more diffuſed itſelf over the Caſtle domain, the ſuppoſed unexiſting, and, by the gay crowd, almoſt forgotten Ethelreda ſat muſing in her ſolitary priſon. She had kept no regiſter of the time of her confinement, and could almoſt have fancied that years had rolled over her head, and that ſhe, grown old within its walls, was no longer intereſted in any thing that paſſed beyond them. But it was an idea ſhe did not like to indulge; for inſenſibly it led to the recollection of thoſe friends whom ſhe ſo tenderly loved. It was impoſſible to think of the world ſhe had quitted for ever, without remembering her ſiſter and Conway; and, whilſt ſhe was trying to forget them, and return to the calculation ſhe had been making of the number of the days of her confinement, the ſound of muſic ſtole upon her ear like the "ſweet ſouth." There was ſomething aërial in the ſound that at once diverted her attention from herſelf; it ſeemed "about, above, and underneath." At intervals, the ſoft ruſtling of the trees which grew in the deep vale below the tower, and the murmuring of the retreating tide upon the pebbles, interrupted yet improved the melody. Loſt in penſive admiration at ſuch an aſſemblage of

of ſweet yet wild and ſolemn ſounds, which brought all the traditionary ſtories of the exquiſite bards of her native mountains to her memory, ſhe aroſe, and, taking the lamp, walked through the long paſſages to her father's apartment.

Ethelreda ſtood a few moments to contemplate her father's portrait, and, wiping the tears from her eyes, paſſed on through the gallery to the little turret. Here ſhe left her lamp, and began to ramble amognſt the battlements, to admire the beauty of the night, the ſoft freſhneſs of the air, and the ſound of the muſic that ſtill continued to vibrate, though leſs diſtinctly, on her ear; when, turning towards the park, ſhe was at once aſtoniſhed at the glimmering of numberleſs lights amongſt the trees, and the almoſt undiſtinguiſhable noiſe of voices.

For a moment it occurred to Ethelreda that Conway might be there. She turned away diſguſted at the thought, and ſickened at the ſound of revelry; then, ſtraining her eyes as if poſſible to ſee him, ſhe continued gazing on the lights, loſt in a thouſand perplexing ideas, and heedleſs of the lapſe of time, till ſhe was rouſed from her reverie into terror and diſtreſs at hearing the near approach of voices in the courts of the Caſtle; by which ſhe concluded the family was not yet retired, and that ſhe had perhaps expoſed herſelf to the chance of being diſcovered. The exceſs of her terror almoſt took away her ſenſes; when ſhe heard diſtinctly the opening and ſhutting of the gates, and almoſt believed ſhe could diſtinguiſh footſteps traverſing the apartments through which ſhe had already paſſed, and muſt return. The day began to dawn, whilſt Ethelreda, anxiouſly liſtening in

agonies of fear and irreſolution, was debating whether it was ſafe to return; till obſerving the glow of the morning, and apprehending that ſome early labourer would ſee the fluttering of her white garments over the battlements, and alarm the family, timidly returned to the little turret, where her lamp was ſtill lighted, but burning pale and feebly at the return of the morning light. She walked cautiouſly through the gallery and her father's apartment, and had almoſt gained the furtheſt door, when ſhe heard one fall together behind her, and the echo of footſteps as of people haſtily following. The power of moving was denied her; her feet ſeemed rooted to the ground; and though ſhe might immediately have concealed herſelf by lifting up the hanging that covered the private door leading into the library, ſo entirely were her ſenſes ſuſpended at the danger that threatened her, that ſhe waited till the door opened and preſented to her diſmayed ſight the forms of two perſons, though the diſtraction of her mind prevented her from recognizing the perſons of Carloville and Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling! By an involuntary emotion, Ethelreda inſtantly lifted the lamp to her face: the ſickly blue flame added a tint to the horrors her features expreſſed. Lady Mariamne immediately knew the ſhade of her rival: ſhe neither ſhrieked nor fainted, but fell on her knees with every expreſſion of ſupplicating guilt.

Carloville too, the hardened and unfeeling Carloville, for a moment forgot the ſtory of her death was of his own raiſing; and whilſt his eyes were fixed on her motionleſs countenance, and in a voice ſcarcely human he was trying to articulate a prayer for forgiveneſs, the

flame

flame died away, and involved the phantom in obſcurity.

"She's gone!"—exclaimed the terrified Mariamne, falling on her face upon the floor.

"She ſhall not eſcape me!" cried Carloville, ruſhing towards the door; the thought inſtantly recurring to him that Ethelreda's was not a preternatural appearance.

The exclamation rouſed Ethelreda from the torpor that had ſeized her; ſhe availed herſelf of the concealed door, and precipitately retreated as ſilently as if ſhe had really been one of thoſe viſionary forms that are ſuppoſed to glide about in aſſumed ſhapes, or diſſolve into air at their pleaſure.

Carloville had placed himſelf at one door, expecting the ſuppoſed ghoſt would attempt to eſcape at the other exactly oppoſite to it, of which its hoarſe ruſty hinges, which had made ſufficient noiſe on his entering, would give him notice. He waited a few moments—the deadneſs of the ſilence alarmed even him—he called to Lady Mariamne; for as yet the twilight was ſo obſcure, owing to the dimneſs of the painted windows and their incumbered form, that the oppoſite ſide of the room was not diſcernible. She returned no anſwer; for her terrors became ſo powerful at ſeeing the ghoſt actually vaniſh, that ſhe fainted.

Carloville, alarmed at her continuing inſenſible, and in fear leſt ſuch delays ſhould overturn his ſchemes, which he had by no means relinquiſhed, was at a loſs how to proceed. He was now certain Ethelreda was ſtill in the Caſtle: but, perceiving ſhe had once more eſcaped him by ſome incomprehenſible means, he knew not what obſtacles ſhe might have the power of raiſing to the detriment of his plans;

or whether it would be more expedient to raiſe an outcry and ſecure her perſon, or, by ſuffering the illuſion of her death ſtill to paſs upon the world, take his chance for once more getting her into his power whenever his plot ſhould require her re-appearance. After ſome ſhort debates in his own mind (for the exigency of the caſe would admit of no other), and perceiving that, by delaying the execution of his preconcerted intention, he ran the moſt imminent hazard of irretrievably ruining himſelf with the Strathener family, by means of Lord Caerleon (who would, from this laſt imprudence of Lady Mariamne, conclude all his ſuſpicions well founded, and take precautions to prevent any future intercourſe between himſelf and L'Eſterings), he finally decided in favour of his original ſcheme.

In a bye-road not many paces from the Caſtle, according to his appointment, waited a hired chaiſe, in which he placed Lady Mariamne not yet recovered from her fainting—not a little alarmed leſt, when her ſenſes returned, ſhe ſhould remember the ghoſt, and in a fit of contrition refuſe to proceed in their journey. The motion of the carriage very ſoon revived the conſcience-ſtricken lady. At firſt Carloville tried to laugh her out of ſo abſurd an idea as that of having ſeen an apparition, and to perſuade her that ſhe was ſtill under the impreſſion of ſome terrifying dream. But ſhe was too firmly convinced of the contrary to believe the phantom ſhe had ſeen was raiſed by her own imagination; by turns ſcreaming with terror at the frightful remembrance, and entreating to be ſuffered to return.

"I proteſt," cried Carloville, alarmed at her eagerneſs and the exceſs of her terror, "I ſwear

ſwear you ſhall not return under this fantaſtic impreſſion that has taken ſuch ſtrong poſſeſſion of your mind: it will be a ſufficient plea for your family, ſhould they be ſo inclined, to confine you, and ſay you are deranged."

"Deranged!" repeated Lady Mariamne: "As ſurely as I live, I ſaw her—pale, and ſtanding motionleſs in her ſhroud!"

"Well, well! I hope to convince you very ſoon that what you ſay is utterly impoſſible."

Again Lady Mariamne urged the ſtrong conviction of her ſenſes, and ſometimes in a ſupplicating, ſometimes in a haughty tone, inſiſted upon returning; whilſt Carloville, repreſenting every poſſible diſadvantage under which ſhe would return to her family, and the undoubted vengeance of Lord Caerleon, tried every means of raiſing her ſpirits by the moſt fervent aſſurances of unalterable attachment, and a repetition of all his former promiſes; at the ſame time redoubling his charges, and raiſing the rewards of his poſtillions at every ſtage.

CHAP. XIII.

Non biſogna la morte,
Ch'a ſtringer nobil core,
Prima baſta la fede; e poi l'amore.

TASSO.

THE night on which Sir Francis had given his entertainment, Conway and his mother arrived at Strathener from Frampton-Lodge. The next day was that fixed on for his marriage with his couſin Octavia, who received him with a tolerable degree of civility, and ſuffered his inattentive and abſent behaviour to paſs without any ſpiteful comments; which in ſome meaſure cauſed his ſtrange and altered manners to eſcape the particular obſervation of the reſt of the family. But, indiſpoſed for ſociety, Conway made no apology for his ſilence, nor did he wait till the uſual hour of ſeparation, but moſt unceremoniouſly withdrew before ſupper, leaving the whole party not much diſpoſed to gaiety or late hours, and drawing ſtrange preſages from the more than indifference of his courtſhip.

It was Lord Trecaſtle's wiſh to be preſent at his daughter's marriage; he was therefore deſirous the ceremony ſhould be performed at Strathener, becauſe a late fit of the gout made it dangerous for him to venture as far as St. Siffrid's, the pariſh church. This intention of her father's Octavia however had foreſeen; and knowing her acquieſcence would effectually

ally counteract her own plans, ſhe ſuffered the error to continue till the very day, and then peremptorily refuſed to be married any where but at St. Siffrid's. Lord Trecaſtle ſtormed as uſual, but gave way to his daughter's caprice, and deputed Lord Caerleon to ſupply his place; whilſt he diſpatched a note to Caſino Belvedere, in order to ſurpriſe Sir Francis and Lady Mariamne, who had been previouſly invited to be preſent by Lady Octavia herſelf. It was late in the morning before the diſputed point could be ſettled, and Conway, to the wonder of part of the family, had not made his appearance.

The abſence of a perſon ſo materially intereſted did not fail to produce an effect upon the temper of Lord Trecaſtle; Caerleon looked ſneeringly from time to time at his uncle, whoſe mind was far from being the moſt compoſed; and even the bride's nonchalance ſeemed to give way to ſuch extraordinary treatment—when at paſt eleven o'clock Conway, followed by his dog, walked into the room; that moment returned from a ramble which had laſted ſince ſun-riſe.

The negligence of his air and manner could not fail to ſtrike Caerleon with aſtoniſhment: he eyed him from head to foot repeatedly; heat and exerciſe had raiſed a glow on his cheeks that partly diſguiſed the ravages of fever; and concluding, though nothing could be more foreign to his character, that his indifference was impertinent affectation, he ſcarcely knew how to refrain from uttering the moſt cutting ſarcaſms. Mr. Conway at laſt ventured to aſk, why he had kept them waiting? adding, he was fearful no apologies would be a ſufficient atonement to Lady Octavia.

Conway's

Conway's agitation would ſcarcely permit him to ſpeak. He endeavoured to ſtammer out, that he was ready to attend her ladyſhip; and Octavia, who had been in a thouſand fears for the event, ſuppreſſed her reſentment, and ſuffered him to lead her to the carriage. Lady Caerleon and her Lord followed, at a loſs to conclude what motives could prevail on Octavia to ſubdue the turbulent ſpirit that more than once had been on the point of breaking out into reproaches and rage. The ride was but a ſhort one; during which Conway ſeemed ſo far to have recovered his compoſure as to be able to ſpeak once or twice on their way. Octavia, on the contrary, preſerved a dead ſilence; and Caerleon, whoſe anger ſtill boiled in his heart, could not prevail on himſelf to anſwer; nor did Lady Caerleon chooſe to take the trouble.

But when they reached the church, when Conway ſaw himſelf a ſecond time at the altar, all the events of his unfortunate life ruſhed before him; and when he gave his hand to Octavia, a cold tremor ſhook his whole frame, the drops ſtood on his face, and he ſeemed to endure the agonies of the dying. Octavia herſelf was ſcarcely leſs agitated: notwithſtanding the ſolemnity of the ſervice, ſhe anxiouſly turned her head from time to time towards the door, as if in expectation of ſeeing ſome one enter: her alarm increaſed as the ceremony drew towards the concluſion; and when the clergyman cloſed the book, and ſhe perceived ſhe was actually married, the colour forſook her cheeks, and ſhe fell back into the arms of Caerleon, who ſtood next her. He at firſt could not believe ſhe had really fainted, ſo much was he ſurpriſed: water and ſalts were preſently produced, but without effect; and

Lady

Lady Caerleon, obſerving it was impoſſible for any one to be well in a diſmal damp church, deſired ſhe might be taken into the air. Accordingly, with the aſſiſtance of ſome of the people around her (for Conway attempted not to offer his), ſhe was carried to the coach, where a few hyſterical ſcreams and many tears proclaimed her recovery.

Conway, whoſe faculties were wholly engroſſed with former ſcenes, never obſerved that he was alone. He ſtill ſtood on the ſame ſpot, his eyes fixed on the ſame objects, and his attitude motionleſs; when his attention was at once rouſed and arreſted by a viſion the moſt extraordinary, and that almoſt annihilated his remaining ſenſes. The drapery that adorned the altar moved ſlowly—a figure with that kind of countenance and grace that we ſuppoſe angelic, advanced a ſtep or two, and then kneeling, uttered with fervent action and the devotion of a ſaint a ſhort prayer. Conway thought he heard his own name pronounced—he thought he ſaw features that were once known to him—he thought it was a viſion, and, not in fear but rapture, paſſed his hand before his eyes in order to clear his ſight—he looked again, and ſaw nothing.

It was a moment of more painful ſuffering than he had ever known. He was not ſuperſtitious, but he was convinced by the moſt certain evidence, he had ſeen the ſhade of Ethelreda; that he had heard his own name uttered by her. In the firſt tranſports of his joy he thought ſhe would have ſpoken to him—have told him to follow her; but when he perceived the phantom had melted into air, he could have reproached her aſhes with cruelty, could he have found utterance: but words died upon his lips,

lips, deſpair and horror had ſeized upon him, and he fled precipitately from the ſcene of his marriage, which appeared to him to have raiſed the perturbed ſpirit from its laſt habitation.

After having waited ſome time in the carriage in expectation of being joined by Conway, whoſe conduct became ſtill more inexplicable to Caerleon the more he conſidered it; in order, if poſſible, to alleviate Lady Octavia's grief, which rather increaſed than diminiſhed, he went himſelf back to the church to remind him of the neceſſity of accompanying them back to Strathener: at the ſame time debating with himſelf whether Conway's extreme negligence deſerved his compaſſion or his reſentment, he was at laſt inclined to believe his faculties had really ſuffered from his late illneſs: he was not therefore very much ſurpriſed, on returning to the church, to find it locked, and no one remaining of whom he could make any enquiry. He now fancied he could perfectly remember ſomething very unuſual in Conway's manner; and ſeriouſly alarmed leſt ſome extravagant action ſhould follow the eccentricities he had obſerved, he haſtened back to Strathener, intending to leave the ladies there, and ſet out in ſearch of his couſin, provided he had not returned alone. Owing to the various delays that had occurred in the events of the morning, it was late when they returned to the Caſtle, where a new ſcene of confuſion had ariſen, which entirely baniſhed all thoughts of Octavia's ſtrange marriage from the head of Lord Trecaſtle, and cauſed him to overlook Conway's equally ſtrange abſence.

The ſervant who was diſpatched with a note to Sir Francis and Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, to requeſt to ſee them at Strathener, had met

met Sir Francis on the road, who immediately directed him to St. Siffrid's to deliver a meſſage to Lady Mariamne, in order to appriſe her of his being at Strathener, and to deſire ſhe would join him there. The meſſenger returned with all poſſible ſpeed, and informed his maſter, "that Lady Mariamne and their Lord," the ſervants of the Caſtle had told him, "had not been ſeen ſince the preceding evening, and they ſuppoſed her ladyſhip and their maſter were returned to Caſino Belvedere to breakfaſt." Lord Trecaſtle, who could make nothing of the meſſage, applied to Sir Francis for ſome explanation; which he was unable to give, becauſe he was unwilling to own that Mariamne had ſlept at St. Siffrid's, and that he had returned to his own houſe; though at the ſame time, notwithſtanding his blindneſs heretofore, the actual ſtate of the caſe immediately occurred to him, and he was firmly convinced, in his own mind, nothing was further from the intention of Carloville, or his wife, than to come to Caſino Belvedere. He had ſuffered Lord Trecaſtle, however, to diſpatch another expreſs to his houſe, in order to allay his impatience, which on moſt occaſions was extremely troubleſome; and by the time Caerleon made his appearance with his party, the good peer's anxiety, joined to ſome ill humour and much rage, had partly deprived him of the power of expreſſing himſelf, for to his ſon he was perfectly unintelligible. Much explanation was, however, unneceſſary to make Caerleon comprehend in its fulleſt extent what had happened, when the names of his ſiſter and Carloville were repeated to him. Paſſion and uproar give no idea of the fury of invective with which he aſſaulted the almoſt paſſive Sir Francis;

Francis; in one moment ſtorming for his horſes and fire-arms, execrating the wretch who had diſgraced herſelf and her family, and vowing terrible vengeance againſt the companion of her flight.

Lord Trecaſtle, who expected his meſſenger would return with ſatisfactory tidings, endeavoured to perſuade him into patience; whilſt Mr. Conway prudently prevented him, though more by main force than entreaty, from beginning his purſuit whilſt there was yet a poſſibility of preventing the ſuſpicions Lady Mariamne had excited from being more generally known. It grew late, however; and no news arriving, the tumult of Caerleon's paſſions, unuſed to reſtraint, could no longer brook the ſuſpenſe: he proteſted he would go that inſtant to St. Siffrid's Caſtle, to collect every circumſtance, ſcornfully telling Sir Francis, he might follow him or not as he pleaſed.

Sir Francis, who was perfectly indifferent as to the fate of his lady, and wiſhed nothing ſo ardently as never to ſee her again, had no intention to ſuffer in the opinion of Lord Caerleon, who only ſtaid to order a carriage to follow him to St. Siffrid's, and haughtily walked on at ſo quick a pace that Sir Francis had ſome difficulty to keep him in ſight.

CHAP. XIV.

O cecita delle terrene menti
In qual profonde notte,
In qual foſca caligine d'errore,
Son le noſtr' alma immerſe
Quando tu non le illuſtri, o ſommo ſole!

GUARINI.

ALL day Conway wandered through the woods that ſurrounded the Caſtle: the viſion ſtill flitted before him; every moment increaſed the horrors that diſtracted him; and the ſtate of his mind, long unſettled by contemplating his own misfortunes, wanted not the aſſiſtance of an event ſo extraordinary to fix him in a reſolution the moſt fatal and deciſive.

By urging him to a marriage with Octavia, ſo contrary to his happineſs, he perſuaded himſelf, his father and mother had no longer a right to depend on him for theirs. But this idea alone would not have been ſufficient to deſtroy the remorſe he felt at the ſorrow and diſtraction he ſhould bring upon them—had not the extraordinary apparition of Etheſreda, which he had ſo clearly ſeen, ſeemed to confirm him in his intentions, and raiſed a momentary phrenſy, which left his thoughts but one object, that of following her by any means in his power.

He reſolved to return to the church, from which he had wandered a conſiderable diſtance, and had in his perplexity loſt himſelf amongſt ſome ſtraggling buſhes, which partly covered a heath

a heath of no great extent that overlooked the ſea. It was the grey of the evening; and at the time of the year when the days and nights are of an even length, the twilight does not continue long. Though Conway had traverſed the ſame ſpot a hundred times, and with Ethelreda, he no longer preſerved any recollection of its ſituation. His impatience helped to increaſe his perplexity, when the barking of dogs, and the almoſt inſtant appearance of his own ſpaniel, made him obſerve the glimmering light of a cottage at ſome diſtance, which had eſcaped his obſervation. Without noticing the careſſes of the overjoyed animal, Conway walked towards the light with extreme haſte, expecting to be directed towards St. Siffrid's.

A woman approached the window with a ruſh candle. "St. Siffrid's, ſir?" ſaid ſhe, pointing towards ſome diſtant light: "You are not a quarter of a mile from the village." The woman looked ſtedfaſtly at him whilſt ſhe ſpoke; "You are Mr. Conway!"—ſhe exclaimed, with extreme ſurpriſe: "Ah, ſir! the laſt time I ſaw you—" the poor woman could not help weeping at the recollection, and Conway himſelf now forcibly remembered the laſt time he had ſeen her was with Ethelreda, who had taken her under her protection, and that often in her name he had himſelf given her money.

"She employs me for the laſt time," ſaid Conway, taking out his purſe, his watch, and pocket-book, and giving them through the caſement. The woman retreated in amazement, and would have returned them; but Conway darted over the heath with ſo much rapidity, that in a moment ſhe loſt ſight of him.

He

He continued his way with equal ſpeed, till he came near the Caſtle. At a little diſtance from the outer gate waited Lord Caerleon's carriage, and ſome of his and Sir Francis's ſervants, who were holding their horſes whilſt they waited for their maſters. Conway approached them, and, taking a piſtol from the holſters, aſked if they were loaded? One of the men anſwered that they were. He put it in his pocket, and walked through the gateway to the Caſtle. In the inner court was aſſembled a large group. But neither the lights, nor the people, nor the clamorous ſounds of their voices, attracted Conway's attention; and all were too much engaged to obſerve him. The doors of the different entrances to the apartments round the court were open, as if ſome ſudden alarm had aſſembled the inhabitants from every part of the Caſtle; and Conway, availing himſelf of the eaſineſs of its acceſs, ſilently followed the lights in ſeveral of the corridors till he came to thoſe rooms the Harwoods uſed moſt conſtantly. The lights, however, here deſerted him, and gloomy grey duſk and total ſilence preſented themſelves, inſtead of cheerful and the moſt flattering reception, which had always awaited him in his former viſits at St. Siffrid's.

He came at laſt to the library. As he paſſed, the ſkirts of his coat bruſhed againſt the ſtrings of a harp, one of the unalienable appendages of the Caſtle. The vibration produced a momentary alarm mingled with joy upon the heart of Conway. He thought it was another intimation from the ſhade of Ethelreda; he trembled with agony, and, though ſtrongly determined, hung back for a moment from the fate he had prepared for himſelf. Again a noiſe behind

behind the arras ſtartled him. His dog, who had followed him with inſtinctive watchfulneſs, ruſhed forward and barked furiouſly. "It is Carloville!" exclaimed he; and revenge overcoming deſpair, he graſped the piſtol which he held in his hand, and ſprung towards the ſound with ſo much force and violence, as to fall through the concealed aperture, and down ſeveral of the ſteps. He roſe however inſtantly, neither feeling nor knowing that he had fallen, and purſued his way in total darkneſs, panting and breathleſs with impatience, but animated to proceed by hearing the ſound of ſteps retreating before him. He continued to advance till he ſeemed to have left the noiſe behind him, which no longer appeared but as the phantom of a diſturbed imagination. He ſtood a moment to recollect, if poſſible, where he was, and to liſten to the ſound that had deluded him; when a low, hollow, and murmuring, but muſical tone ſtruck his ear.

Conway was neither weak, nor credulous, nor ſuperſtitious: yet in his calmeſt moments he might have been ſurpriſed, though not diſmayed, at circumſtances ſo wonderful, and which carried with them unqueſtionably a ſupernatural appearance; but the ſlow fever that had long preyed upon his ſpirits, had riſen to delirium, and at that moment he knew not whether he really exiſted, or whether he was not a ſhade like that he had been purſuing.

As he proceeded, the aërial ſounds continued to float towards him, till at laſt a ſmall ray of light from the door above pointed out to him Ethelreda's habitation.

Without heſitating, he aſcended to the door; it was half open. The clear ſtrong light of a lamp which hung over the table, plainly diſcovered

covered to him the figure of a woman leaning her face on both her hands, which reſted on the table. He inſtantly comprehended it was the ſame phantom that had already appeared to him; but not daring to advance, leſt the very air he breathed ſhould diſſove the unſubſtantial viſion, he ſtood leaning forward, his eyes fixed, and motionleſs as a ſtatue; and his mind ſo agitated at the idea of ſeeing her fade from before him a ſecond time (for in reality his ſight began to fail, from the intentneſs with which he gazed), as to produce a convulſive tremor, which cauſed his teeth to knock together with ſo much violence, that Ethelreda, diſturbed and terrified, raiſed her head and beheld—not Conway—but a ſpectre that would have appalled the moſt intrepid!

His countenance, though it diſplayed nothing of terror, was pale, exhauſted, and ghaſtly; his eyes ſo eager and piercing they ſeemed more than human; his mouth half open; his hand raiſed; his whole figure repreſenting a man rapidly advancing to ſpeak, but ſo entirely motionleſs as to give no idea of an animated body.

Ethelreda, in horror, tried to paſs him and eſcape at the door. He too was rouſed at ſeeing her move: he ſuddenly ſtepped back, the door fell together; ſhe ſhrieked, and would have retreated. By an involuntary emotion he ſtretched out his hand towards her; again he reproached the deluſive ſhade, he implored her to return; and ſo ſtrong was the force of imagination, that he held the real Ethelreda in his arms without perceiving for a moment that he had not graſped at an airy phantom.

Doubt and ſuſpenſe at laſt gave way to certainty, and almoſt to joy. "You live again! —You breathe!" cried Conway, repeatedly; but

but Ethelreda, motionleſs and nearly lifeleſs, could neither ſpeak nor releaſe herſelf from his hold. "Let us go, let us fly this moment from this grave," continued he, leading her towards the door.

"Who *are* you?" ſaid Ethelreda, finding utterance.

"Who am I!" repeated he, in a tone not to be deſcribed.

"I know! I know you are —— but how altered——"

"Not *here*, Ethelreda!" preſſing her hand to his heart. "Let us not delay a moment."

She hung back, and in a voice ſcarcely articulate, but firm and deciſive, ſaid, "Go you inſtantly. My prayers, my beſt wiſhes ſhall always follow you; but to ſee you again would be my death!

Again Conway's features were diſtorted with horror and ſurpriſe: "The ſight of me is become hateful to you?—You ſhall ſee me no more," he exclaimed in a frantic tone, retreating from her ſome paces as he ſpoke, and ſeizing the piſtol he had relinquiſhed: "You ſhall ſee me no more!" he repeated, in a voice almoſt drowned in convulſive agitation.

Ethelreda ſprung towards him, and, ſeizing both his hands, tried in vain to utter a ſound. Conway, diſtracted as he was, could not but perceive the agonies of diſtreſs that varied her countenance to every ſhade of horror. He entreated, he beſought her to ſpeak, and promiſed to ſubmit to her will unconditionally—but with ſo little calmneſs or coherence, that Ethelreda, not re-aſſured by his manner, ſtill heſitated, neither daring to remonſtrate againſt his violence, nor to repeat her command. After many efforts to ſpeak, ſhe entreated him to be calm,

to hear her patiently, nor to add to her ſufferings by his frantic grief, which had already terrified and diſtracted her.

Conway, alarmed at the preamble, proteſted even with oaths he would not leave her.

"Hear me!—but hear me!" ſhe cried, whilſt ſhe ſaw all Conway's ungovernable paſſions riſing in his countenance; "hear but this laſt time what I have to urge, and you yourſelf ſhall determine."

"Oh! I gueſs all that you can urge!" cried Conway; but I ſolemnly ſwear——"

"Stop—if you value my peace—at leaſt till you have heard me ſpeak," ſaid Ethelreda, interrupting him.—"I will not reproach you, nor increaſe the agitation of your mind by regretting my own misfortunes. They commenced long before I knew you; but ſeparated as we are, I have a right to demand of you ſome ſacrifice in return for thoſe I have made."

"Who ſays we are ſeparated?—Who ſhall dare to ſeparate us?" reiterated Conway in the moſt piercing tone.

"*Separated as we have long been*," continued Ethelreda, "you were free to form new engagements. I myſelf am witneſs to your marriage this morning. The ſacrifice I aſk is a promiſe, in the moſt ſerious and ſolemn manner given, that you will return to your family, determined to ſubdue your paſſions, and fixed never to make a ſecond attempt to ſee me. You will drive me from this laſt refuge. I repeat to you, it would be impoſſible."

"It is true," cried Conway, attempting to conceal the impreſſion her commands had made upon him, "till within this hour I believed you no longer exiſted; it is true, I conſented to

this marriage, from which nevertheleſs I have ſworn to releaſe myſelf. I meant to keep my oath; but you, Ethelreda—you will preſerve me from it without perjury."

"Conway," ſaid Ethelreda with aſſumed courage, "I remind you of your promiſe."

"What promiſe have I given? What deſperate promiſe would you oblige me to keep?" cried he, relapſing into fury. "Cruel and unrelenting as you are! I ſee you, and I have forgotten the phrenſy that ſeized me, when you left me in ignorance of your fate, wrapped in the myſtery of diſguiſe.—I have forgotten all the ſorrows I but this morning endured whilſt I deplored your death. Yet you talk of new ſacrifices—more excruciating!—But I ſteadfaſtly reſolve never to give you up—I will never leave you—I will die at your feet—I have not the courage to make any other ſacrifice!"

"You will ſee me expire, if you perſiſt in this cruel perſecution!" cried Ethelreda, too firmly perſuaded of his reſolution to conceal her own agitation. "My peace of mind, my honour, depend on you—and yet you will not be prevailed on to leave me—to relinquiſh your fatal purpoſe againſt yourſelf—Remember how ſolemn is the engagement that divides us:—You are married."

"You forget that we are united by the ſame engagements, more ſolemn, becauſe our hearts entered into the agreement, than a mere ceremony now no longer binding."

"Your own argument condemns you," ſaid Ethelreda, almoſt exhauſted with the contention: "I am no longer bound by thoſe engagements which I entered into againſt my judgment, but with my whole heart."—"Oh, Conway! you

you know that from me you are free—you know I am no longer your wife !"

" Your heart declares in my favour !" exclaimed Conway—" I aſk no other teſtimony. To know that you live, and that you prefer me—yet to leave you for ever in the power of a wretch !"—Oh Ethelreda ! my ſenſes depend on you—Go with me, or let me die—or hear me rave, and perhaps in my extravagance accuſe you of my misfortunes.—Is not your honour mine ? Is not your peace my peace ?—Oh, do not—" continued he in a ſupplicating tone, " do not have to reproach yourſelf with my eternal deſtruction !—Will it not be conſolation ſufficient to ſuch a mind as yours, my Ethelreda, that you have preſerved a ſoul ?"—Whilſt he yet ſpoke he had ſupported her to the door.

Ethelreda no longer reſiſted his entreaties ; ſhe burſt into tears, which ſhe tried in vain to ſuppreſs—" If my grief ſhould become irkſome —if it ſhould appear only as a reproach to you, not the effect of my own weakneſs, you will lament your infatuation when it is too late."

" I have but one anſwer," ſaid Conway in a gloomy tone, putting at the ſame time the piſtol to his head.—Ethelreda ſhrieked faintly, and, hiding her face in her gown, ſtifled her tears, nor ſuffered another ſigh to interrupt the ſilence of their melancholy march through the ſubterraneous paſſage.

At laſt they reached the library ; and Ethelreda, who had taken upon herſelf to be the guide, with trembling ſteps led the way to the deſerted apartments, where ſhe had ſo recently ſuffered the moſt terrible fears at the ſight of Carloville, from whoſe power ſhe ſo unexpectedly reſcuedherſelf, little imagining her fate had ſtill mere diſtreſſing events in reſerve for her,

and that Conway—Conway whom ſhe ſo much loved—ſhould be the inſtrument.

They traverſed the gloomy apartments, one after the other, without any impediment; whilſt Ethelreda, ſtill averſe to the ſtep ſhe was about to take, dared not truſt her voice with a ſound, leſt it ſhould betray the ſenſations that agitated her; but pointing to the doors through which they were to paſs, Conway in equally dreary ſilence advanced to open them; and though he knew not what could be the end of going through theſe forſaken rooms, which he had never remembered as leading to any way out of the Caſtle, he truſted implicitly to his guide, whoſe repugnance he ſaw, but dared not ſuſpect her ſincerity. Conway, whoſe heart was as generous as his temper was impetuous, grown ſomewhat calmer by Ethelreda's compliance with his frantic propoſals, could not but reflect, as his reaſon returned, on the extraordinary ſacrifice he had demanded of her; nor could he fail to perceive how deeply his diſtreſs muſt have affected her, ſince, in ſpite of her judgment, which could not be convinced, and her principles, which he now plainly perceived, notwithſtanding all her efforts, revolted from the compliance he had extorted from her, ſhe was prepared to follow and be controuled by him, though he read a thouſand melancholy fears and preſages in every varying expreſſion of her countenance.

Whilſt Conway, free from paſſion and unblinded by any ſelfiſh motive, made theſe obſervations, and drew concluſions from them no longer irritated by oppoſition, his intellects regained the energy they had nearly loſt; he revolved in his mind his own conduct, and bluſhed with ſhame to ſee that the violence of his paſſions had made him ſelfiſh and unfeeling; whilſt

whilſt Ethelreda, wrought upon by his phrenſy, had conſented to devote herſelf to everlaſting regret.

To perceive an error in his heart was with Conway to abjure it; but ſtill they went on, and aſcended the little turret which led to the roofs of the Caſtle. When they reached the door, Conway ſtopped; Ethelreda, perceiving he did not advance, paſſed him, and, having opened it, would have put out the lamp.

"Not yet!" ſaid Conway, preventing her, and turning away his face to conceal the tears he could not ſuppreſs, and the cold drops that ſtood on his forehead.

Ethelreda looked at him earneſtly; but not daring to aſk his meaning, ſhe led the way through the windings of the battlements till they came to a flight of ſtone ſtairs on the outſide of the Caſtle, probably made for the accommodation of the archers who formerly defended its walls.

Ethelreda, who ſtill went firſt, was the firſt to perceive the crowd aſſembled in the Caſtle court as ſhe looked over the parapet; and inſtantly retreating at the ſound of their voices, and at the name of Carloville often repeated, ſhe turned her eyes on Conway, ſcarcely knowing whether to rejoice at the impediment to their proceeding for her own ſake, or to lament it for his.

"This then is the way I am to go?" ſaid he, taking her hand in both his, and holding it to his heart; "and when I have for ever paſſed theſe walls, who ſhall guide me?—who will ſhield me from my own impetuoſity?—Think of me—let me have your prayers." He turned to go: for a moment Ethelreda ſtood ſuſpended in her reſolution—but almoſt inſtant-

ly relapſing into her former fears for his ſafety, "Let me follow you!" ſhe cried, choked by her tears, and contending with her own forebodings.

"No, do not follow me!" ſaid Conway more calmly—"I no longer aſk it of you. My family, my country, are nothing to me; in you I ſaw every thing: I will make one effort, for you, who have not only given up every connection, but even your liberty.—I cannot equal—let me at leaſt try to imitate you; I have been ſelfiſh, I will not be unjuſt;—tell me where I ſhall go—adviſe me for the laſt time."

Whilſt Conway was earneſtly ſpeaking, yet pauſing and heſitating in order to lengthen the few ſhort moments he had to ſpend with Ethelreda, the voices became ſtill louder and more clamorous, and, diſtant as they were, they diſtinctly heard the name of Carloville and Lady Mariamne repeated in different tones and voices; but above all they particularly diſtinguiſhed that of Lord Caerleon by turns queſtioning the ſervants, and contending with Sir Francis, who, as well as they could gather, was averſe to a purſuit.

At once new ideas and new hopes flaſhed on Conway's mind, that ſparkled on his eye, and gave an air of wildneſs to his countenance that half terrified Ethelreda, who, not ſo eaſily raiſed from ſadneſs to joy, could not account for his ecſtacies, or how ſo ſudden a tranſition had been produced on a mind the moment before depreſſed and ſunk to the loweſt pitch of deſpondence.

"If there be truths in preſages or portents," ſaid Conway, once more ſeizing her hand and preſſing it to his heart—and then, without finiſhing

finiſhing the ſentence, "Farewell! my own Ethelreda!" he cried, and, rapidly deſcending the ſtone ſtairs, preſently mingled among the crowd below.

Ethelreda, loſt in a variety of perplexing thoughts which bewildered her the more ſhe conſidered, ſhe approached the parapet in order to liſten; but the ſounds grew lower and more indiſtinct, and preſently the lights and the whole party diſappeared.

Conway had no ſooner left Ethelreda than her thoughts once more returned to the ſubject that had engroſſed them the whole day; her having been diſcovered by Carloville. In flying from him ſhe had taken refuge in the church, where ſhe had ſeen the ceremony of Conway's marriage with Lady Octavia; and, deceived by the departure of others, had incautiouſly ſhewn herſelf to Conway, whom ſhe immediately perceived, and inſtantly retreated; fearing nothing ſo much as being diſcovered by him, particularly as ſhe was now circumſtanced, under the neceſſity of ſeeking a refuge without the walls of the Caſtle, where ſhe had been ſo long and ſo ſafely protected. She ſtill debated whether ſhe ſhould remain another night; but determined not to decide without the advice of Llewellyn, as indeed without his aſſiſtance it would have been impoſſible for her to eſcape, and conceal herſelf in the neighbourhood till ſome means ſhould preſent themſelves of retreating entirely. As ſhe returned to her cell, a thouſand projects occurred to her, which ſhe rejected as impracticable; half rejoicing ſhe had it ſtill in her power to withdraw herſelf entirely from Conway's purſuit whilſt ſuch ſtrong impediments exiſted to ſeparate them, and half ſorry the idea had preſented itſelf at all.

When ſhe reached her priſon, ſcared, terrified, and not daring to truſt his ſenſes, Llewellyn came to meet her—unable to expreſs his ſurpriſe and joy at ſeeing her again, or his terror at having loſt her; for it was he who, having alarmed Conway by moving behind the hangings, was miſtaken by him for Carloville, and purſued through the vault till he availed himſelf of the paſſage that led to the church, and by that means eſcaped the fate that otherwiſe would certainly have befallen him.

When Llewellyn could articulate, he related to his miſtreſs the full extent of his fears; which, on finding her abode dark and deſerted, immediately repreſented to him that ſhe had been ſeized and carried off by Carloville's orders, who had diſcovered her retreat, and had himſelf departed before hand in order to diſpoſe of her where ſhe might never more moleſt him.

He then informed her of the report, in circulation in the houſe, of her death; which he had always looked upon as a malicious invention of the ſervants: but which he now believed was meant to anſwer ſome particular purpoſe. The idea too ſtruck Ethelreda; ſhe tried in vain to penetrate it, nor could Llewellyn aſſiſt her. At all events ſhe concluded herſelf no longer ſafe in the precincts of the Caſtle; and having entreated Llewellyn to procure her ſome means of retreating, either by a boat under the Caſtle walls, or in any other way he could deviſe, ſhe declared her intention of departing by means of the trap-door communicating with the upper room in the tower, the door of which opened into the park; a ſhort diſtance either from the ſea or the village, and much leſs expoſed to diſcovery than any of the ways through the Caſtle.

CHAP

CHAP. XV.

Neſcio quod certè eſt, quod me tibi temperat, aſtrum.

PERSIUS.

ON leaving Ethelreda ſo inſtantaneouſly, and with ſo little ceremony, Conway mingled with the party in the Caſtle-court. A thouſand confuſed and extraordinary ideas ruſhing through his mind, prevented him from ſtaying one moment to communicate them to her: indeed, ſo rapid were the concluſions he had drawn, that he left her without any of thoſe violent ſenſations that uſually accompany a final ſeparation —he left her inwardly prepoſſeſſed there would be nothing to prevent their meeting in future. He had entirely forgotten Octavia.

Lord Caerleon and Sir Francis L'Eſterling were queſtioning and croſs-examining the ſervants when Conway joined them; but nothing could be gained from their anſwers that was at all concluſive—though the account they gave of both having departed before any of the inhabitants of the Caſtle were ſtirring, was to Caerleon a corroborating circumſtance which juſtified all his ſuſpicions, and left him no plea to doubt of the ſtep his ſiſter had taken. Mr. Fitz-Piers, amongſt the other gentlemen whom the diſturbance had collected, was in vain trying to ſoothe Lord Caerleon, who one moment ſwore to execute the bittereſt vengeance on the delinquents, and the next attacking Sir Francis

with almoſt equal virulence, ſeverely upbraided him with his folly and want of ſpirit, in the moſt cutting and provoking terms.

Sir Francis, in the mean time, was in the cooleſt and moſt unconcerned manner arranging in his pocket book what little information he could collect from the ſervants, without attempting to anſwer one ſingle ſyllable to all the reproaches Caerleon beſtowed upon him. Conway, more eager than either to know the moſt minute circumſtance, had by turns attended to each; but finding it equally impoſſible to gain any thing from Caerleon's rage, or Sir Francis's ſtupidity, he addreſſed himſelf to Fitz-Piers; who clearly related to him, as he had collected them from the two gentlemen, their ſuſpicions, and how far they were confirmed; adding, he believed the intention of Lord Caerleon was to purſue them immediately with Sir Francis, provided the latter could be prevailed on to accompany him. "I am ſorry to acknowledge," continued Fitz-Piers, "that I am a relation of Carloville's; but that ſhall not prevent me from offering my ſervices to Lord Caerleon in any way he will dictate. I am ready this moment to join in the purſuit."

Conway inſtantly declared the ſame intention; and Caerleon ſeizing Sir Francis roughly by the arm, and turning him half round, ſtared full in his face for half a minute, and, turning on his heel with a contemptuous ſneer, told Conway and Fitz-Piers he ſhould be glad of either of their ſervices.

Sir Francis in the mean time had made up his mind to accompany Lord Caerleon. "Neither Mr. Fitz-Piers nor Captain Conway will diſpute that I have the beſt right to purſue Lady

Lady Mariamne," cried Sir Francis, ſtepping before them and Caerleon. "I have only one condition to make with you, my Lord; if they ſhould take it into their heads to go and hide at that curſed Pæſtum Poſidonium, I muſt and will decline following them. I admire antiquity, I worſhip architecture; but I am not ſo much in love with the clumſy Doric as to expoſe myſelf to the malaſia."

"If you go with me you ſhall ſearch for them in the bowels of Veſuvius, but you ſhall find them!" vociferated Caerleon, laughing in the midſt of his rage.

"Agreed!" cried Sir Francis: "I have no choice about the mountains; Veſuvius or Gibello are equal to me—Empedocles and Pliny like, let's be off!"—and immediately followed without any farther preliminaries.

Neither Conway nor Fitz-Piers could object, but both were diſappointed at not ſucceeding in their propoſal; and Conway, who was bent on it at all events, declared his intention, and was going, in order as ſpeedily as poſſible to make preparations, when Fitz-Piers again offered himſelf, and was thankfully received.

Fitz-Piers inſtantly ordered his own chaiſe, and both adjourned to the ſtables; where, without ſcruple or ceremony, Conway choſe out four of Carloville's fineſt horſes, and himſelf aſſiſted the grooms in harneſſing them with all poſſible expedition, whilſt with ſome preſence of mind he diſpatched ſervants to provide relays on the road—making light, in the ardour of his hopes, of the many hours ſtart they had of them, and of their entire ignorance of the route they had taken; though both himſelf and Fitz-Piers were unanimous in the opinion that they had made for the continent by way of Hamburgh; particularly

particularly Fitz-Piers, who, knowing with what facility Carloville could adopt the diſguiſe of a foreigner, made no doubt that ſuch were his intentions; which once effected, he declared he ſhould have no farther hope of his detection. But Conway, more ſanguine becauſe more deeply intereſted, ſwore ſolemnly, no circumſtances, however, diſcouraging, ſhould oblige him to relinquiſh the purſuit.

Fitz-Piers, whoſe purpoſes towards his couſin, though he execrated his conduct, were by no means hoſtile, made it his firſt requeſt to Conway not to furniſh himſelf with piſtols; who immediately complied, declaring it was by no means his deſign to deprive Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Lord Caerleon of the right of revenging themſelves, though he avowedly joined them that Carloville might not eſcape and hide himſelf from their vengeance. Conway forbore to add the moſt powerful argument to his ready compliance, that he dared not truſt himſelf leſt in the delirium of his rage ſome raſh act might for ever raiſe an inſuperable bar betwixt him and his hopes—hopes, wild, mad and irreconcileable as they were, that gave new life and ſtrength to his frame, and vigour to his intellects.

CHAP. XVI.

——— be not over exquiſite
To caſt the faſhion of uncertain evils;
For grant they be ſo, while they reſt unknown,
What need a man foreſtall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would moſt avoid?

MILTON.

THE family at Strathener Caſtle had long waited in the moſt tormenting ſtate of anxiety and ſuſpenſe, expecting hour after hour the return of the laſt meſſenger from Caſino Belvedere, or that Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Lord Caerleon would return, or ſend ſome one with diſpatches from St. Siffrid's.

Lord Trecaſtle, whoſe natural impatience did not require the ſtimulating addition of a lurking fit of the gout, and expected ill tidings of the moſt ſerious nature, continued to traverſe the room as well as he was able, with his watch in his hand, counting the tedious half-hours till the meſſenger arrived; whom he repeatedly threatened he would diſmiſs his ſervice for not performing his duty with more expedition. Mrs. Conway, who had once or twice drawn upon herſelf the moſt peeviſh anſwers to queſtions the moſt kindly intended, could ill conceal her own particular uneaſineſs. The dinner had been announced more than once, but Lord Trecaſtle, forgetting it was Lady Octavia's wedding-day, roughly reprimanded the

the ſervant, declaring he would not ſit down to table: indeed Lady Octavia had not made her appearance ſince the news of her ſiſter's flight; which had ſo entirely engroſſed Lord Trecaſtle's thoughts, that neither Octavia, nor Conway, nor their marriage, had once occurred to him.

But both Mr. and Mrs. Conway knew that their ſon had not been at Strathener ſince his marriage. The apparent length of the ceremony had ſurpriſed them: Octavia's grief and ſullenneſs had added to their alarm; for ſhe had refuſed to anſwer a ſingle queſtion, having ſhut herſelf up in her own dreſſing-room from the moment of her return.

Caerleon was too much enraged and irritated at the news that awaited him to mention Conway; and both Mr. and Mrs. Conway ſympathiſed too much with him and his father, in the calamity that had befallen them, and indeed their whole family, to trouble him with interrogatories. But, as it grew ſtill later. and night advanced, the fears and apprehenſions of each increaſed. Mr. Conway, in ſpite of all his efforts, could not prevent his thoughts from dwelling on his ſon's words in their laſt converſation on the ſubject of his marriage with Octavia; words whichwere deeply fixed on his memory, often as he tried to drive them from thence. "You will remember it with horror!" inceſſantly he repeated to himſelf, and ſhuddered with terror as he repeated them, and almoſt penetrated their terrible meaning.

Mrs. Conway had ſeveral times quitted the room to make enquiries, unperceived by Lord Trecaſtle, anxious not to add to his grief by any freſh cauſe of apprehenſion. She had ſcarcely reached a veſtibule, through which ſhe was going to another room, when the meſſenger, that inſtant

inſtant returned from Caſino Belvedere, rapidly paſſed her towards the room where his Lord ſo impatiently waited. Juſt as he reached the door, Mrs. Conway called to him to deſiſt, preſaging the whole truth, yet not daring to aſk, and fearing the effect it might have on an old man of violent paſſions like Lord Trecaſtle. But the man, in too much haſte to attend to her, opened the door; and had no ſooner abruptly declared that neither her Ladyſhip nor Lord Carloville had been ſeen by any part of Sir Francis's houſhold, than Lord Trecaſtle, after ſeveral efforts as if to interrupt the relation, fell down ſpeechleſs in a fit.

Mr. Conway rung the bell, and called aloud for aſſiſtance. The ſervants came running from every part of the houſe; and Mrs. Conway, ſeeing him ſtretched on the floor, concluded he was dying or dead, and ran towards Lady Octavia's apartment in order to prevent her from ſuddenly hearing it from the ſervants. The door was ſhut, but not locked. Mrs. Conway opened it; but finding it dark and ſilent, paſſed through to another room, ſtill in expectation of ſeeing her: but in vain—all the rooms uſually occupied by Lady Octavia were ſilent and empty; and Mrs. Conway, ſurpriſed, though more than half-prepared for ſomething extraordinary, rang the bell, and enquired of the woman who anſwered it, for Lady Octavia or her maid? "Lady Octavia's maid had not been ſeen by the other ſervants in the houſe for ſome hours—ſhe was ſuppoſed to be in her lady's rooms."

Mrs. Conway, accompanied by ſome of the women, walked through all the rooms in the Caſtle; not that ſhe had the ſmalleſt expectation of ſucceſs from the ſearch ſhe was making, for

for from the firſt moment ſhe conjectured Octavia had taken her departure, though ſhe wearied herſelf in gueſſing the motive; and had not the time materially diſagreed with that of Lady Mariamne's flight, ſhe would have concluded, to a poſitive certainty, that it was preconcerted between the two ſiſters to go off together. But that was impoſſible: Lady Mariamne, ſhe was poſitively aſſured, had eloped with Lord Carloville: Lady Octavia, it appeared, had taken her ſervant with her; and Conway too was miſſing: yet it was extremely improbable they were gone together—and the only plauſible reaſon that could be aſſigned for the abſence of either, was, that they wiſhed to avoid each other.

After an ineffectual ſearch throughout all the rooms for Lady Octavia, who was no where to be found, Mrs. Conway directly communicated the extraordinary intelligence of his niece's flight to Mr. Conway, who, in the midſt of his perplexity, immediately thought of purſuing her, till he recollected that ſcarcely a horſe or even a ſervant remained in the houſe that was not engaged or already diſabled; for he had diſpatched ſome to the neareſt towns for any medical aſſiſtance that could be procured; and others to Frampton-lodge with a carriage for Dr. Felton, who he hoped was not already gone. For a moment he lamented that circumſtances ſhould every way concur to prevent him: but inſtantly all his terrible apprehenſions for Conway returned—"She is of but little conſequence to me now!" he unconſciouſly exclaimed in a tone of deep diſtreſs but ill diſguiſed, and turned away.

Mrs. Conway clearly comprehended his meaning referred to Conway: a damp of horror ſeemed

to ſtrike to her heart; but not daring through exceſs of apprehenſion to aſk for any explanation that might confirm her terrors, ſhe continued to wander the whole night from her own room to Lord Trecaſtle's—where Mr. Conway ſat up—enduring the moſt poignant diſtreſs, yet not daring to give it utterance leſt ſome dreadful confirmation ſhould follow. One moment, flattered by a diſtant ſound, ſhe would impatiently liſten at the window; and the next, alarmed at a whiſper or a breath in the room of the invalid, almoſt to convulſions. The tedious long night at laſt wore away; but the grey dawn of the morning ſeemed to bring with it a ſtill more melancholy and deſponding aſpect, when Mrs. Conway, tired and exhauſted, yet not inclined to ſleep, endeavoured to relieve her wearineſs by walking into the air, cheerleſs and lowering as it was: ſcarcely able to ſupport herſelf, and ſhivering with cold and apprehenſions, ſhe walked acroſs a lawn to a little gate leading into ſome fields, through which a pathway reached to St. Siffrid's.

Mrs. Conway ſtood ſome moments, her eyes directed forwards though without looking, till at laſt a woman, who had approached cloſe to the gate without beingperceived by her, ventured to aſk leave to paſs. Mrs. Conway, ſtarting, and almoſt ſcreaming at the ſound of a voice, turned her eyes on the woman, who, perceiving ſhe was ſpeaking to one of the ladies of the Caſtle, began to apologize, by ſaying ſhe did not expect to ſee any of the ladies ſo early; and, heſitating as if fearful of being ſuſpected of ſomething diſhoneſt, produced Conway's watch, purſe, and pocket-book, proteſting ſhe came purpoſely to return them.

Mrs.

Mrs. Conway glanced her eyes upon them; and inſtantly recogniſed the purſe, which ſhe had ſeen before, ſhe caught hold of the woman's arm to ſupport herſelf, unable to utter a ſyllable. The woman, alarmed at the action and at her countenance, with much conſternation attempted to exculpate herſelf, by declaring the gentleman had thrown the things in at a window, and diſappeared ſo ſpeedily ſhe could not return them; whilſt Mrs. Conway, aſking no other confirmation of the ſuppoſed cataſtrophe than the ſcared viſage of the woman, fainted and fell on the ground. Inſtead of ſtaying to aſſiſt her, the terrified creature ran towards the Caſtle, and directed the aſtoniſhed ſervants to the ſpot where Mrs. Conway continued inſenſible; nor till after ſhe was removed into the houſe, and aſſiſted by ſtrong eſſences, did ſhe recover her ſenſes; but grief and diſtraction not to be aſſuaged ſpeedily brought on a violent fever, with ſymptoms threatening the moſt ſerious conſequences.

It is impoſſible to ſay whether Mr. Conway felt this terrible calamity more or leſs acutely than his wife. Outwardly indeed he was more compoſed; but internally he ſaw himſelf as the author of his own and her ſevereſt misfortunes, and prayed to be releaſed from the dreadful conviction, whilſt he execrated his avarice and ambition, now on the point of being gratified with riches and titles, become his ſevereſt ſcourge, his inceſſant torment, his bittereſt reproach. "You will remember it with horror!" rung upon his ear in every ſound. He thought he ſaw it in every eye, that looked reproach, and not pity, when he turned on all ſides for comfort, but could meet with none.

Sometimes

Sometimes he thought of Octavia, and felt the ſtings of his conſcience, which upbraided him with having obliged her to quit her father's houſe, and perhaps fall into ſtill greater errors. He too, if ever he recovered his reaſoning faculties, would find himſelf deſerted and diſgraced by both his children. Ingenious in torments, Mr. Conway's conſcience repreſented to him, under every poſſible ſhape, the miſchiefs he had occaſioned; and ſuch is the complicated puniſhment of the deſigning, that they become ſelf-burthened with thoſe faults of others for which they are not entirely accountable. This was in ſome degree Mr. Conway's caſe with reſpect to Octavia's flight; which was not altogether occaſioned by him, ſince ſhe had reſolved to marry the Count de Clerac; who, having obtained her promiſe for what he moſt wanted, her money, was perfectly well inclined that Conway ſhould take the lady, and purpoſely avoided to interrupt the ceremony, as he had promiſed.

Blinded by her vanity, which more effectually diſguiſed the Count's motives than all his own arts, Octavia, perſuaded herſelf that ſome unforeſeen event had interfered: and, confiding in the fidelity of the Count, ſhe reſolved to fly from her father's houſe, and conceal herſelf with the utmoſt care, till ſome expedient could be adviſed (and ſuch ſhe did not doubt there were) to negotiate a ſeparation from Conway, or rather annual her marriage, that ſhe might beſtow herſelf with the remainder of her fortune on the deſerving and faithful Count—who would now have it in his power to give a glorious proof of his diſintereſted attachment, by marrying her when twenty thouſand

thouſand pounds of her fortune were in his power, without what is conſidered by mercenary lovers an incombrance, or, at beſt, a needleſs appendage.

CHAP. XVII.

Quelques crimes précédent toujours les grands crimes :
Quiconque a pu franchir les bornes légitimes
Peut violer enfin les droits les plus ſacrés :
Autant que la vertu, le crime a ſes degrés,

RACINE.

CARLOVILLE, in carrying off Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, fully expected to be purſued; but, having ſo great an advantage in point of time, he inwardly deſpiſed every idea of being overtaken, though he inceſſantly perſuaded her they were cloſely followed, to reconcile her to the rapidity of their motion, and of which ſhe continually complained. As their purſuers had readily gueſſed, it was Carloville's determination to make the beſt of his way to the Continent; where he knew he could conceal himſelf and his companion for any length of time, that is, till it ſhould no longer anſwer his purpoſe. His intention was to get to any place on the coaſt, where he could procure a ſmuggling veſſel for a reward to put

put to ſea with him, and land him on the coaſt of Holland, or any where elſe, as wind and weather might ſerve; confident of his own ſucceſs in diſguiſe, he cared not for the place.

But Lady Mariamne, whoſe preſence was ſo eſſential to the ſucceſs of this adventure, had already repented her own folly and temerity in engaging in it. The recollection of the apparition continued all the day; whilſt her conſcience repreſented the injured Ethelreda in extreme wretchedneſs, ſick, and dying with poverty and grief, which ſhe could not fail to attribute to her own unprincipled calumnies. She ſaw herſelf more guilty than ever ſhe had falſely repreſented the unfortunate Ethelreda. She had already *ſeen* the offended ſpirit; ſhe ſeemed to hear her threatening pains, and puniſhments, and tortures; already ſhe fancied they were begun, and, in the diſtraction of her ſufferings, cried out againſt the ſeverity of their infliction.

As it grew dark, the terrors of her guilty mind increaſed: not confined to incoherent expreſſions, ſhe vented her agonies in loud ſhrieks, tears, prayers and ſupplications.

Proof as he was againſt all feeling, Carloville, for his own ſafety, could not perſiſt in going on whilſt this paroxyſm of remorſe laſted; ſince it could not fail to attract the attention of paſſengers, and at leaſt be repeated from its ſtrangeneſs, on the road, till it ſerved as a clue to whoever ſhould be in purſuit of them. Had not this unforeſeen circumſtance occured to detain them, they would have reached Southampton before the morning, when Carloville would have accounted himſelf perfectly ſafe from purſuit: and, even circumſtanced as he was, he concluded he had little to

fear,

fear, his route unknown, at a ſmall ill-frequented houſe in a little village out of the high road, which he had quitted in order to croſs the country. It is true the accommodations were bad, but trivial inconveniences he had been uſed to overlook; and the ſtate of Lady Mariamne's mind prevented her from noticing the bare white-limed walls and ordinary furniture of the miſerable room into which they were ſhown.

It was ſtill Carloville's wiſh to continue his journey before morning; and, not doubting but Lady Mariamne would be diſcouraged from ſtaying all night in a place of ſo unpromiſing an aſpect, he preſſed her to take ſome tea which he had ordered, adding, they ſhould be obliged to perform another ſtage before morning, from the impoſſibility of remaining where they were. For ſome time Lady Mariamne had been tolerable compoſed; but when Carloville propoſed continuing their journey, ſhe relapſed into her former terrors—ſhe ſcreamed, ſobbed, and entreated to ſtay. In vain Carloville tried to pacify her; he found it impoſſible to reſtore quiet, except by promiſing to remain where they were that night: and dreading leſt her violent ſhrieks ſhould already have alarmed the houſe, he went out to give directions to his people, and to order his piſtols into the room, that at all events he might be provided with a defence, and ſecure his own retreat if he were forced to relinquiſh his prize.

Carloville's undaunted ſpirit, which, whilſt he met with no impediment, had borne him through this hazardous enterpriſe with the moſt ſanguine hopes of ſucceſs, was but ill prepared for the delay this obſtinacy of Lady Mariamne's ſo unſeaſonable occaſioned. As they

they ſat ſilently looking at each other, Carloville had leiſure to reflect on the preſent critical ſtate of his affairs; and his ſpirits began to flag for the firſt time when he conſidered the conſequences of his villainy, ſhould it be unſucceſsful.

"By Heaven, ſomething muſt be done!" cried he, ſtarting ſuddenly from his chair towards the door—"Bring me a bottle of brandy!"

Lady Mariamne, again alarmed, ſhrieked two or three times.

"No more noiſe! No more fooling!" cried he, advancing towards her ſternly; this is no time for ceremony—be quiet and compoſed. Our ſituation grows deſperate, and we muſt uſe deſperate means," laying hold on one of the piſtols. "You muſt and ſhall proceed!"

"Oh mercy!" cried the terrified Mariamne, her face full of fear and horror: then for a moment recovering her native haughtineſs—"Piſtols!—And this language to *me*, ſir?—Are you mad?" ſhe exclaimed in real ſurpriſe at his changed manners. At that moment a man brought in a bottle and ſome glaſſes.

"Not mad, but determined!" cried Carloville, filling out a glaſs and preſenting it to Lady Mariamne, who turned away her head in diſguſt.——"Don't oblige me to ſwear—I ſhall frighten you; but by—by all the devils, you ſhall drink it!" he continued, putting the glaſs cloſe to her lips. Terrified to the laſt degree, ſhe no longer heſitated to ſwallow the whole doſe. "Well done! Braviſſimo!" cried Carloville: "Are you not in excellent ſpirits?—Come, half the bottle will juſt do the ſame for me—Now I am up to any thing. Let's

Let's be gone this moment!—I tell you again we have not an inſtant to loſe—" he continued, whilſt he filled glaſs after glaſs, and nearly forgot his haſte in indulging one of his favourite propenſities. He was too much addicted to the uſe of ſpirits, for any thing leſs than an immoderate quantity to have any effect upon him. The liquor, however, had conſiderably added to his already brutal manners; and the ſelf-devoted and unprincipled Lady Mariamne, terrified at his menaces and oaths, but not daring to reſiſt his commands, already bitterly execrated herſelf, and the companion for whom ſhe had given up every valuable conſideration.

" One glaſs more—And now—curſe me if I ſtay another ſecond!—Zounds! 'tis paſt five o'clock," ſaid he, looking at his watch—" What a devil of a time have you been getting ready!" added he, addreſſing Lady Mariamne. " Come, come along!" roughly ſeizing her arm: " I muſt be a damn'd fool to be baffled twice—by women too!'——Partly by force, and partly out of fear, Carloville had got Lady Mariamne as far as the ſtairs, when a loud and confuſed noiſe of voices below obliged them to ſtop and liſten.

Above them all that of Lord Caerleon was the loudeſt, and the moſt diſtinctly to be heard. For an inſtant both were riveted to the ſpot where they ſtood, till they heard a clamour on the ſtairs, and Sir Francis L'Eſterling proteſting and inſiſting on being allowed to enter firſt. Inſtantly Lady Mariamne ſprung backwards towards the room they had quitted, and ſlapped the door againſt Carloville, who followed her —" Here!" cried he, putting a loaded piſtol into her hand: " You muſt—muſt defend yourſelf!"

yourſelf" Then throwing up a window, he would inſtantly have left her to the mercy of her enraged relations, had ſhe not forcibly laid hold of his arm, and at the ſame moment Sir Francis L'Eſterling was before her face. Lady Mariamne ſcreamed dreadfully, and ſprung back ſeveral paces; ſhe held the loaded piſtol at arm's length, pointed at her huſband, with a horrid wildneſs in her countenance bordering on inſanity, whilſt her quivering lips refuſed to utter a ſound.

Carloville too retreated ſome ſteps with an irreſolute and agitated air, and for the firſt time with a portion of ſhame that prevented him from looking in the face of the injured man whom he had called his friend.

Sir Francis's eyes were fixed on Lady Mariamne. Naturally mild and compaſſionate, he was ſhocked at her appearance; and with more coolneſs and courage than the uſual tenor of his character ſeemed to indicate, ſtill advanced notwithſtanding her menacing attitude. "Lord Carloville", ſaid he, "you ſee I am unarmed—Pray, madam, be more compoſed, I have no hoſtile intentions towards *you*."—The ſentence was yet upon his lips when he received the whole contents of the piſtol in his face, and inſtantly dropped dead on the ground, mangled, disfigured, and ſtreaming with blood. Caerleon had followed Sir Francis into the room; and equally diſtreſſed, enraged, and aſtoniſhed at his ſiſter's appearance, and at ſeeing her now beyond all doubt abandoned and worthleſs, had not the power of ſpeaking, till at the report of the piſtol he ſprung forward, though not quick enough to catch the body, which fell almoſt acroſs the feet of Carloville.

Even Carloville, when he felt the weight of the murdered corpſe, when he ſaw himſelf covered with the blood of the injured Sir Francis, the melancholy event in effect occaſioned by him, ſuffered ſomething more than remorſe. A thouſand horrid ſenſations agitated him, and his features preſented an expreſſion more diabolical and more fearful than imagination can form; they were no longer human when he ſurveyed himſelf, and exclaimed in a ſhrill voice, "Here are ſpots enough to damn a whiter ſoul than mine!"

What!" cried Caerleon, in a tremulous tone, and almoſt overcome with horror at the ſcene, "Did you kill him?"

"No, by Heaven! as I hope for mercy! ——I lie!—I do not hope for mercy!——But I did *not* kill him—Do you not ſee my piſtol? —I had but one, 'tis charged now up to the muzzle. You may try to hang me—but if that's not an evidence——I'm a curſed fool! I'll not truſt any evidence—You will hang me as an accomplice—or I ſhall hang myſelf by ſome blunder or other.—Come, I'll bet you Sir Francis's eſtate, I'm not hanged, or taken." He darted towards the window, and inſtantly jumped into a ſmall garden; the height was inconſiderable, and, recovering his feet, he preſently gained the other ſide of the hedge that encloſed it.

From the moment Lady Mariamne had, unintentional of murder, committed the fatal deed, ſhe ſtood fixed and immoveable in the ſame attitude, the piſtol ſtill clenched in her hand, and her arm extended, till from weakneſs it fell from her hand on the floor. The noiſe it made in falling, rouſed her ſtupified ſenſes into new horrors; ſhe ſcreamed Mur-

der!

der! as loud as ſhe was able, and fled to the window. The people, who had heard the report of the piſtol, but knew not whether it was within or without the houſe, came running towards the garden: "Come—come with me!" cried Caerleon, alarmed, and catching both her hands; "You ſhall go with me!"

"What, to priſon?—Where ſhall I go?—Will you bring me to juſtice?—Will you appear againſt me—an evidence againſt my life—your ſiſter's life, my dear Caerleon—my brother—Oh Heaven, have mercy on my ſoul!—My brother—my own brother—" ſhe repeated, agitated and ſtruggling, with a convulſed yet ſupplicating countenance.

"May Heaven have mercy on her ſoul!—Oh God, forgive her!" cried Caerleon in an agony of diſtreſs: "Come this inſtant, or I leave you!—I muſt fly this inſtant, or I ſhall indeed be an evidence againſt her life." Then quitting her trembling hand, he ruſhed towards the door, and preſently reached his carriage, which waited for him at a little diſtance from this unfortunate ſcene. He had ſcarcely been abſent a quarter of an hour: conſequently the ſervants, who were commanded by the maſter to remain with the horſes, knew nothing of the ſhocking cataſtrophe that deprived ſome of them of a kind and liberal maſter. Caerleon flung himſelf into the chaiſe, and called out, in a ſuffocated tone, to drive on.—"Your Lordſhip does not wait for Sir Francis?" ſaid a ſervant, who held the door in expectation of his coming. Caerleon could not anſwer, but, reaching towards the door, ſhut it himſelf. After waiting a few minutes, the man ventured to aſk where to drive? Unable to ſpeak, he

could only point the way, and thought only of returning to Strathener in time to prevent the horrid tidings from coming undiſguiſed to the ears of Lord Treeaſtle. At firſt he felt a momentary ſatisfaction at having eſcaped the dreadful neceſſity of appearing againſt his unhappy ſiſter, from which nothing but his precipitate flight had ſaved him; but in a moment the forlorn and deſolate ſituation of the miſerable Lady Mariamne returned to his imagination, and, torn and diſtracted by the conflict of his feelings, which would neither ſuffer him to proceed, nor to return to the unhappy object from which he had torn himſelf in horror not to be deſcribed, he performed his ſolitary journey, overwhelmed by a complication of the moſt diſtreſſing calamities that ever joined to oppreſs the heart of a man far from callous or inſenſible when open to reflection, even when leſs nearly touched than in the preſent inſtance in the perſons of his relations.

Caerleon had ſcarcely quitted the houſe, when the people of it entered the room where the bloody ſpectacle of Sir Francis's body preſented itſelf, and the almoſt equally appalling ſight of the diſtracted and raving Mariamne.

"Where's the murderer?" aſked one of the men repeatedly.

Lady Mariamne put her hands before her face, and, in a guilty tone, cried out, he was gone!—"Here's ſomething that will go near to hang him though," ſaid another, picking up the piſtol "it has a fellow ſomewhere—I would not be the man that has it for a hundred pounds; 'twould hang the greateſt man in the county—"Hang whom?" cried Lady Mariamne in a voice that ſtartled the ſurrounding group—"Me, or my brother?"

"You!

"You! Ma'am?—Your brother! Ma'am?" repeated ſeveral in various tones of aſtoniſhment—"Pray, ma'am," ſaid the one who had firſt ſpoken, and who belonged to the houſe, "was the gentleman who came with you your brother?"

"Oh!, no, no!"

"What then, the young gentleman?"

"Yes."

"Well! who could have thought it of that young gentleman!—Poor dear lady! Her own brother to be hanged!"

"I tell you," cried Lady Mariamne in an agony of impatience, "'tis a lie! he is innocent."

"If it was not him, 'twas the other then.—Which way did he go?"

"Out of the window."

"Out of the window!—Then I ſaw him get over the hedge!" cried another. "Run, run, Jack!" ſaid the firſt: "we ſhall all be brought in for our trial elſe! and I'll go for the coroner, and the lady muſt be bound over."——"Stop, ſtop!" cried Lady Mariamne; but all the men were out of hearing, or rather too intent upon the purſuit to liſten to any objection.

Whether it was the ſpirit ſhe had ſwallowed, or a temporary phrenſy that ſupported her, hitherto Lady Mariamne's ſtrength had not failed her; limbs ſtill ſupported her, and her faculties ſeemed perfect: yet there was a wildneſs in her aſpect that awed the two or three women that remained in the room with her—none of them ventured to interrogate her; but one who ſeemed more compaſſionate than the others, obſerved, it muſt be very diſmal

for the lady to ſtay there with the corpſe, and aſked if ſhe had not better go down ſtairs?

Lady Mariamne burſt into tears for the firſt time. "Lord, the corpſe!" cried another who ſeemed to be in great tribulation, "what in the world ſhall I do?"—Perhaps the coroner may'nt come theſe two days, and one muſt not ſo much as move the poor gentleman! And what a condition the room will be in! all ſtained!—And ten to one if the neighbours don't ſay 'tis haunted!"

"Go—leave me—" ſaid Lady Mariamne with ſome remains of her former haughtineſs: ſhe pointed to the door as ſhe ſpoke, and in a moment the room was empty.

It was now clear day-light. The ſun roſe bright and glorious over a beautiful and picturesque country; the birds ſung cheerfully; the ſmoke riſing from the cottages in the village ſhowed that the buſineſs of the day was begun. The labourers paſſed along, gaily whiſtling, to their work; and flocks of innocent happy children enjoyed themſelves in the ſunſhine.

For a moment or two Lady Mariamne gazed at the ſcene before her—She conſidered every object ſeparately; ſhe grew ſick and deſponding at the ſight, and turned away her wretched eyes from the glare, to fix them on a more terrible one. The ſame bright ſun ſerved only to preſent, under every ſhape, objects of horror and of remorſe; for it ſhone ſtrongly on the cold breathleſs body; it exhibited more plainly the disfigured countenance, and diſplayed what was once the face, without any traces of reſemblance, or form of features. Not ſatisfied with contemplating the melancholy and mangled form at a diſtance, ſhe approached the body, and, dropping on her knees, fixed her

her eyes upon it, appalling and horrid as it appeared. Whilſt ſhe gazed intently upon the ſickening ſpectacle, ſhe could not perſuade herſelf that ſhe felt ſorrow or repentance; ſhe could ſhed no tears—ſhe could utter no ſound of regret; and when ſhe tried to lament, ſhe fancied her voice expreſſed pleaſure and gaiety—the ſound of her own breath ſhe miſtook for laughter, and joined in the mirth with a loud convulſed hyſteric. In reality, her faculties were nearly exhauſted; for a moment ſhe held out her hand as if in reconciliation—then touching that of the corpſe, ſprung upon her feet, and gently opening the door with a diſtracted air, but cautious not to make a noiſe, deſcended the ſtairs, and, unperceived, ſtrolled out of the village, through fields and ſolitary lanes, till ſhe reached the high road, having made a progreſs of ſome miles inſenſible of fatigue or inconvenience.

Here ſeveral country people on their way to the neareſt market town paſſed her, not without much curioſity, which a figure ſo uncommon could not fail to excite even in the moſt ignorant and unobſerving. Lady Mariamne's height was rather above middle ſize; ſhe was dreſſed in a black riding-habit, being in mourning for Ethelreda. Her hat ſhe had left at the inn; the comb that ſupported her hair behind had dropped out; and her hair, of a remarkable length falling down her back, and partly blown over her ſhoulders, and ſoiled her habit with a great quantity of powder. But her countenance alone would have attracted notice—her large ſparkling black eyes were rendered more brilliant by delirium; her features naturally were perfectly handſome—but her noſe had

for the lady to ſtay there with the corpſe, and aſked if ſhe had not better go down ſtairs?

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It was now clear day-light. The ſun roſe bright and glorious over a beautiful and picturesque country; the birds ſung cheerfully; the ſmoke riſing from the cottages in the village ſhowed that the buſineſs of the day was begun. The labourers paſſed along, gaily whiſtling, to their work; and flocks of innocent happy children enjoyed themſelves in the ſunſhine.

For a moment or two Lady Mariamne gazed at the ſcene before her—She conſidered every object ſeparately; ſhe grew ſick and deſponding at the ſight, and turned away her wretched eyes from the glare, to fix them on a more terrible one. The ſame bright ſun ſerved only to preſent, under every ſhape, objects of horror and of remorſe; for it ſhone ſtrongly on the cold breathleſs body; it exhibited more plainly the disfigured countenance, and diſplayed what was once the face, without any traces of reſemblance, or form of features. Not ſatisfied with contemplating the melancholy and mangled form at a diſtance, ſhe approached the body, and, dropping on her knees, fixed her

her eyes upon it, appalling and horrid as it appeared. Whilſt ſhe gazed intently upon the ſickening ſpectacle, ſhe could not perſuade herſelf that ſhe felt ſorrow or repentance; ſhe could ſhed no tears—ſhe could utter no ſound of regret; and when ſhe tried to lament, ſhe fancied her voice expreſſed pleaſure and gaiety—the ſound of her own breath ſhe miſtook for laughter, and joined in the mirth with a loud convulſed hyſteric. In reality, her faculties were nearly exhauſted; for a moment ſhe held out her hand as if in reconciliation—then touching that of the corpſe, ſprung upon her feet, and gently opening the door with a diſtracted air, but cautious not to make a noiſe, deſcended the ſtairs, and, unperceived, ſtrolled out of the village, through fields and ſolitary lanes, till ſhe reached the high road, having made a progreſs of ſome miles inſenſible of fatigue or inconvenience.

Here ſeveral country people on their way to the neareſt market town paſſed her, not without much curioſity, which a figure ſo uncommon could not fail to excite even in the moſt ignorant and unobſerving. Lady Mariamne's height was rather above middle ſize; ſhe was dreſſed in a black riding-habit, being in mourning for Ethelreda. Her hat ſhe had left at the inn; the comb that ſupported her hair behind had dropped out; and her hair, of a remarkable length falling down her back, and partly blown over her ſhoulders, and ſoiled her habit with a great quantity of powder. But her countenance alone would have attracted notice—her large ſparkling black eyes were rendered more brilliant by delirium; her features naturally were perfectly handſome—but her noſe had

acquired ſtrong outlines of ſcorn; and her ſtraight dark brow, obedient to her mind, was habitually curved into more haughtineſs and fancied ſuperiority than ever before disfigured the face of a woman. She conſtantly wore rouge, part of which ſtill remained upon her haggard cheek, and gave her the fluſhed appearance of wine, added to the wildneſs of inſanity.

She had followed two or three people on horſeback or in carts, entreating to be taken to the neareſt ſea-coaſt: moſt of them wondered at her figure, but none of them queſtioned, and few anſwered her. She held her pocket-book in her hand, which ſhe offered to thoſe whoſe aſſiſtance ſhe ſupplicated: but either the action was not underſtood, or the value offered not gueſſed at; for the pocket-book, though it contained bills and drafts to a very large amount, was unheeded, and its miſerable owner in want of the accommodation a ſhilling or two would have procured.

"It is worth more than two thouſand pounds!" cried ſhe to a man who had juſt paſſed her in a covered cart without deigning to hear her entreaties. He returned, however, inſtantly. Lady Mariamne put the pocket-book into his hand, and begged with extreme earneſtneſs to be taken to the neareſt town on the coaſt. The man glanced his eye over the notes; and, ſufficiently informed of their value to conclude he ſhould be very well paid for his trouble by the friends of the lady, at leaſt, from whom he fancied ſhe had eſcaped, immediately aſſiſted her into the cart, and reſolved to take her to Southampton, whither he was going; concluding ſhe belonged to

ſome

ſome of the company viſiting that place, and that her intellects were a little deranged; judging, indeed, more from her appearance than her manner, as, from the latter, her cautious anſwers would not furniſh him with any well-grounded ſurmiſes.

CHAP. XVIII.

The time of life is ſhort:
To ſpend that ſhortneſs baſely, 'twere too long
Tho' life did ride upon a dial's point
Still ending at th' arrival of an hour.

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was from mere accident Lord Caerleon and the unfortunate Sir Francis L'Eſterling ſo ſoon overtook the delinquents, of whom they were in purſuit: they were informed, that to attempt croſſing the Severn would occaſion them ſome hours' delay on account of the time at which the tide ſerved; they preferred therefore making a circuit of ſome miles round, as every moment they loſt grew more and more of material conſequence. This apparent obſtacle to their ſucceſs was the only circumſtance in their favour that could have occurred; for Carlisle had purpoſely avoided croſſing, becauſe he knew that at the paſſage-houſe Lady Marianne's perſon, as well as his own.

had been too often ſeen not to be recogniſed; added to the chances of delay, and accidental meeting with his and her acquaintance.

Notwithſtanding the unremitting enquiries of Caerleon and Sir Francis on the road as they purſued them, it was at the diſtance of nearly fifty miles from St. Siffrid's they gathered the firſt information that gave them any hopes they were in the right track; and after the moſt minutely queſtioning the people of the inn, it was ſtill doubtful whether they were not purſuing ſome other equally precipitate travellers. Caerleon had ſworn to find his ſiſter, or he would have been tempted to give over the purſuit, when he heard that two people, their horſes in a foam, had ſtopped for freſh ones; and whilſt one of them took a diſh of coffee in the carriage, the other in the moſt impatient and commanding manner urged them to be quick; that he liberally rewarded the poſtillions, but curſed them for not going faſter.

"This could have been no other than Carloville!" ſaid Lord Caerleon to his companion—"At what time?" continued he to the inn-keeper.

"At paſt ſeven this morning."

"At ſeven?—The devil!—They muſt have driven at the rate of more than twelve miles an hour!—Did you ſee the lady?"

"The lady—if it was a lady—ſeemed very unhappy, and as if ſhe would have been glad to eſcape; ſhe called out once to have the door opened; but the gentleman ſwore at the drivers to go on, and inſtantly they were off."

It was the lady's reluctance that chiefly diſcouraged Caerleon; ſince the conſoling idea that Lady Mariamne's will was contrary to this expedition, every previous circumſtance clearly

clearly contradicted. But Sir Francis, who loved travelling faſt, began to be amuſed with the journey, which the hopes of ſoon bringing his family troubles to an iſſue favourable to himſelf rendered intereſting. He therefore perſuaded Caerleon they were right in continuing their route; who, more in compliance with Sir Francis's requeſt than his own judgment, continued to follow the two perſons deſcribed to him, whom however he had no hopes of overtaking, or of finding them to be Carloville and his ſiſter.

Had the unfortunate Sir Francis L'Eſterling been leſs clearly prepoſſeſſed, he would moſt probably have lived to ſee his domeſtic diſgrace revenged, and without bloodſhed. It was not his intention at any time to fight with Carloville; and, but for Caerleon's violence, and his own want of a proper ſpirit in exerting himſelf to maintain his opinion when he had one, he would not have purſued them. He was by no means a coward, though an effeminate lover of ſhow and trifles: but he conſidered Lady Mariamne too worthleſs for a perſonal quarrel. Fully convinced as he was that her principles were as baſe as her conduct was now become notorious, he wiſely declined hazarding his perſon, unauthoriſed by any laws but thoſe of honour, ſo ridiculouſly miſ-termed, ſo abſurdly ſanctioned; when the law, the only arbitrator an injured man and a gentleman ſhould ſuffer to interfere between himſelf and a raſcal, would coolly and finally have decided and ſettled the difference.

There were peculiarities in Sir Francis L'Eſterling's manners, that had on his entrance into the world procured him the character of a very ſingular man. It is needleſs to obſerve, theſe

theſe were the effect of affectation; he beſtowed all his time and all his thoughts to procure himſelf the reputation of being *original*, and a *character*. It was, however, cloſe and ſervile imitation alone that produced the effect; for Sir Francis naturally poſſeſſed a common underſtanding, ſome ideas, and ſome judgment—but imitating the peculiarities of the moſt marked and oppoſite characters, and by uniting, or more properly ſuffering them to *jar*, in his own manners, he was univerſally believed not to have common ſenſe. Unfortunately for him, Lord Caerleon appeared in his eyes to be the very character—light, airy, and incongruous—he himſelf laboured to ſeem. Lord Caerleon's was not a character for imitation: wild, extravagant, impetuous, haughty; fickle, vain, good-humoured, generous, honourable; ſelfiſh and libertine from education, not nature; the latter, the effect of the profligate examples of corrupt manners in Italy, on a mind open to all impreſſions, and unfenced by precept; the former, the never-failing one of unbounded indulgence and uninterrupted proſperity, on a temper naturally impatient of contradiction. Theſe blemiſhes, and a thouſand fopperies, the effect of faſhion or caprice, were in Lord Caerleon ſtrong contraſts, or foils to qualities more brilliant and dazzling than ſolid or uſeful: he was eloquent, accompliſhed, handſome, brave, elegant, and poliſhed; yet appearing to make ſo light of theſe qualities, though conſpicuouſly vain, as to ſacrifice the moſt valuable to a momentary whim, or the more abſurd example of young men every way his inferiors. It was this inconſiſtent temper in Lord Caerleon that aſtoniſhed all the world. It was exactly what

Sir

Sir Francis L'Eſterling wiſhed to be: it was this inconſiderate wildneſs he had ſo long followed, and tried in vain to copy, that led him, contrary to his judgment (a tame quality he perſuaded himſelf he did not poſſeſs), in purſuit of Lady Mariamne, to enter the room where ſhe was, and to ſtand with the muzzle of her piſtol almoſt touching his face, till in the agitation of her terror it diſcharged itſelf, and the ball entered his brain, ſtopping at once all its further aims at eccentricity.

Caerleon ſcarcely ever ſuffered ſo ſevere a ſhock: independent of the ſhare his own family took in this dreadful calamity, he was grieved and diſtreſſed to a greater degree for the death of Sir Francis, than he thought himſelf capable of feeling for a misfortune, which, if he had foreſeen or imagined it in perſpective, would have given him comparatively none at all. He had always freely diverted himſelf, as well as the reſt of the world, with Sir Francis's follies, and delighted in ſetting the moſt abſurd examples, that he might ſee them all caricatured in his epitome. But much as he would laugh at and deſpiſe the folly, his vanity was highly gratified by it; and in ſpite of all his ſcoffing, Sir Francis's underſtanding, which was not deſpicable, had raiſed itſelf in Caerleon's eſtimation by the very means he took to lower it in that of the reſt of the world. His partiality for Sir Francis reſted on an equally ſtable foundation—his own vanity: which nothing perhaps could have ſhaken but the melancholy cataſtrophe which had juſt happened to the eternal feeder of it. With a rapidity natural to himſelf, a ſtrong concatenation of ideas repreſented his vanity as the author of it. Caerleon was in horror at its

conſequences.

conſequences. He conſidered, for the firſt time, into what pernicious errors he had himſelf wilfully fallen by copying the abſurdities of others; and that, in copying his, Sir Francis had inadvertently been led on to his deſtruction: for he could not but remember with how much inſolent haughtineſs he had over-ruled the more pacific intentions of Sir Francis, who had long ceaſed to diſpute his opinion, or even his will; and though he did not abſolutely hold himſelf guilty of his death, the leſſon was ſufficiently ſtriking to be inſtrumental in correcting the foibles of a man who was neither mad nor a fool.

Melancholy and ſorrowful were the numerous reflections he made on himſelf, his murdered companion, his wretched ſiſter, and his father——He thought too of Octavia and her inauſpicious marriage: for a moment he recollected Lady Caerleon—he ſighed deeply, and recalled to his mind the image of Ethelreda—a tear roſe at the remembrance: he pitied Conway, and more than wiſhed to be him, that he might have been the object of her preference, and have died with her. He was conſcious it was an error to cheriſh the idea: he tried to correct it, and half ſucceeded—to baniſh it by thinking of Roſamond; but he ſaw through the flimſey veil he was ſpreading before his eyes, nor could he perſuade himſelf he was returning to Strathener a better man than he quitted it. He was miſtaken. He had yet had no opportunities of comparing his old habits with his new intentions, or of trying the ſtrength of either; nor was he conſcious, that, in forming them, he had made a rapid progreſs in his own reformation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Each ſubſtance of a grief hath twenty ſhadows,
Which ſhew like grief itſelf, but are not ſo;
For ſorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing intire, to many objects;
Like perſpectives, which, rightly gazed upon,
Shew nothing but confuſion; ey'd awry,
Diſtinguiſh form.

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was now clearly twelve months ſince the Harwoods had quitted St. Siffrid's, and more than ſix that Mrs. Harwood had received no letter from her ſiſter; whoſe ſilence, but for the excuſes Harwood continually invented to impoſe on her, would have affected her health, from the anxiety ſhe ſuffered, which was however conſiderably mended. But Harwood, who foreſaw that it would be impoſſible to carry on the deception much longer, and greatly alarmed leſt the diſcoveries he had to make concerning Ethelreda ſhould not only retard her recovery, but bring on a relapſe, delayed from day to day a diſcloſure, which the preceding one he had reſolved to make. Repeatedly he had written to Llewellyn and Winifred, ſuppoſing them, as he had directed, at Harwood-hall:—his perplexity increaſed at receiving no anſwer from either; till, loſt in in conjectures, none of which could aſſiſt him in penetrating the myſterious veil that hung over the fate of Ethelreda, and which ſeemed

to

to have involved Conway, whoſe ſilence was equally aſtoniſhing, he reſolved to inform Mrs. Harwood of Carloville's return, dreading leſt ſome additional circumſtances ſhould reach his knowledge, which would increaſe the difficulty of communicating the firſt.

But cautiouſly as he endeavoured to prepare Mrs. Harwood for a recital that ſo materially concerned her ſiſter, ſhe could not hear that Carloville was alive, and that Ethelreda was perhaps once more in his power, or ſuffering the moſt terrible fears of being diſcovered by him, whilſt ſhe endured innumerable hardſhips in her concealment, without a grief, horror, and agitation that attacked her ſpirits and nerves, and ſcarcely left her ſufficient ſtrength to inſiſt on returning to England immediately, notwithſtanding Harwood's remonſtrances, who repreſented to himſelf that a mild climate alone, in the preſent precarious ſtate of her health, could ſave her life; till perceiving at laſt, that oppoſition only increaſed her depreſſion, he conſented to leave Liſbon, and return with his whole family to England.

They immediately began to prepare for their little voyage; and the viſible effect the near proſpect of returning produced on the ſpirits of Mrs. Harwood, in ſome meaſure reconciled him to the ſtep; to which however he was ſtill averſe, when he conſidered that all their hopes muſt end on their return, unleſs ſome fortunate event ſhould happen, of which he had not the moſt diſtant expectation. But in raiſing obſtacles to their immediate departure, he partly hoped to ſucceed in a propoſal he intended to make, of going alone, after having waited the event of once more writing to Conway, for he could think of no other; indeed there

was

was not another perſon ſufficiently intereſted, or ſufficiently informed, to whom he could apply. To Mrs. Harwood he pretended to have formed ſome diſtant hopes from this meaſure, in order, if poſſible, to put off her departure, and prevent her from returning at leaſt till the ſpring.

With ſome perſuaſion ſhe conſented to wait another packet from England, though ſtill fixed in her original determination; when, in looking over ſome pamphlets and magazines, which he regularly received from his bookſeller in town, Harwood accidentally read a ſhort but clear detail of the death of Lady Carloville, under a feigned name, at ————, in Switzerland.

Thunderſtruck, but not for a moment ſuſpecting the truth, ſince nothing appeared to him more probable, and which he had partly foreboded from the time Ethelreda ſo ſtrangely diſappeared; he no longer knew how to impoſe on Mrs. Harwood, ſince every expectation he had already raiſed could only end in the bittereſt diſappointment, rendered ſtill more ſevere by the few faint hopes his miſtaken tenderneſs had encouraged; theſe added to his embarraſſment, as he now thought it neceſſary he ſhould have a perſonal conference with Carloville; and that the whole ſad truth could no longer be concealed from Mrs. Harwood, who every day became more and more impatient at hearing nothing in conſequence of Harwood's laſt letter to Conway.

But Harwood, whoſe perplexities ſometimes got the better of his judgment, ſtill put off the intended diſcovery of all he knew of Ethelreda's fate, though his feelings on her account were often on the point of betraying him through

through his long practiſed diſguiſe. Repeatedly he attempted to put his firſt plan in execution, of leaving his wife at Liſbon, and of returning alone to England: but ſhe, ſtrenuouſly adhering to her own reſolution of going with him, left him no alternative; and giving way to her earneſt entreaties, the whole family went on board a packet then lying at the mouth of the Tagus, and only waiting a favourable wind.

From the moment they began their voyage to England, Mrs. Harwood ſeemed to gather freſh ſpirits and health. It was with extreme pain that Harwood, though he obſerved the amendment with rapture, traced every good ſymptom to the animating hope he perceived ſhe had formed of ſeeing her ſiſter again. Convinced by almoſt every demonſtration but ocular proof, that this hope could only end in the moſt fatal diſappointment, Harwood's own ſpirits failed in contemplating the conſequences he foreſaw as inevitable, when the truth ſhould be diſcovered to the ſiſter of Ethelreda. He thought it impoſſible that ſhe could hear tiding of her death without ſinking under the calamity—that ſiſter too the tender, the affectionate Sibilla, whoſe health had already ſuffered under the keen ſenſe of her misfortunes. In proportion as Mrs. Harwood's ſpirits roſe, his were depreſſed; but ſtill under the deluding idea that ſhe was gaining more ſtrength to hear the killing recital, he day after day put off the evil, which ſeemed like the weight of a mountain on his head, from which he dared not relieve himſelf, leſt a heavier load of miſery ſhould be the conſequence.

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the weather—it was impoſſible for the wind to blow from a more favourable point; and Harwood,

wood, who had entertained innumerable fears from Mrs. Harwood's natural timidity, on her account was particularly anxious that it ſhould continue, though the heavy ſeas in the Bay of Biſcay had confined her to her cabin with ſea-ſickneſs, and prevented her from enjoying the extreme beauty of the ſea and ſky: and now almoſt within a day's ſail of their deſtined port, Harwood began to congratulate himſelf on having eſcaped all the alarms to which perſons on the ſeas are expoſed, when the cry of "A ſail!" ſpied in the offing, and diſcovered to be an enemy's privateer, turned all his exultation into grief and apprehenſions of the moſt ſerious nature. The packet unarmed, no idea of reſiſtance could be entertained, and no hopes of eſcaping, as the veſſel, crowding all her ſail, gained upon them every moment. The diſpatches were committed to the ſea with the utmoſt expedition; and the enemy, finding no reſiſtance intended, immediately boarded the packet, and, taking out the officers and crew, replaced them with their own, and immediately ſteered with their prize for the neareſt port. The paſſengers, particularly the ladies, were treated with a tolerable degree of civility; but no perſonal inconvenience could have added to the diſappointment of the Harwoods:—to Mrs. Harwood it ſeemed as if it was predeſtined ſhe ſhould not ſee her ſiſter again, all her high-raiſed hopes changed to preſages of evil, which ſhe tried in vain to conquer. In contemplating this, to her, higheſt grief, ſhe overlooked the many inconveniences and dangers Harwood foreſaw and prudently forbore to communicate, ſo that ſhe was ſpared the unneceſſary pain even in idea; for, in the middle of the night, the firſt

ſince

ſince their capture, the priſoners were moſt agreeably diſturbed by a viſit from the captain of an Engliſh frigate! The ill-ſtarred privateer, having ſailed into the midſt of a ſquadron cruiſing off the coaſt of France, was nearly run down, owing to the darkneſs and the careleſſneſs of their watch; ſhe was boarded immediately, and the packet re-captured.

The Harwoods, too happy at their moſt unforeſeen eſcape to run any more riſk of being carried into France, were rejoiced to hear they were within a few hours ſail of the Iſle of Wight; and Mrs. Harwood, who had already ſuffered much from ſickneſs, was moſt thankful when ſhe once more found herſelf and her family ſafe on Engliſh ground, the packet having landed them at Southampton.

After all the diſtreſs and fatigue they had ſuffered, both of body and mind, repoſe was abſolutely neceſſary for Mrs. Harwood and her children; who would not have ſubmitted to it on her own account, every hour increaſing her impatience to meet with or hear ſomething of Ethelreda. Harwood, who wiſhed exceſſively to go alone to St. Siffrid's, in order to hold a conference with Carloville, was glad of any circumſtances that would favour it; and, not to loſe time, he propoſed to her to ſtay a week or two at Southampton, to recruit her ſtrength, and that of her children, before they undertook their journey into Weſtmoreland.

"Wales has no longer any claims upon us," ſaid he; "and though I think it neceſſary to go to St. Siffrid's, I would willingly ſpare you the fatigue, as well as regret of ſeeing the Caſtle in other hands."

"It

"It would indeed be with regret!" exclaimed Mrs. Harwood: "The laſt time Ethelreda and I were in the Caſtle together, we were not happy; yet we were both happier than we are now."

"Perhaps not," ſaid Harwood.

"I wonder," ſaid ſhe, without obſerving him, "if we ſhall ever meet there again?"

"No—I rather think, not in the Caſtle," ſaid he, after a ſhort pauſe, trying to ſuppreſs a ſigh that was almoſt a groan.

"Why?—why not?" cried ſhe impatiently. "It ſounds as if I had few ſerious troubles, to hear me ſay ſo; yet I think nothing could add more to my preſent uneaſineſs, than to be told I ſhould never ſee our dear Caſtle again." Whilſt ſhe ſpoke, Mrs. Harwood looked earneſtly in his face. She inſtantly read in it ſomething of ſtrange import, and, ſtarting up and catching his arm, exclaimed eagerly, "You know ſomething—ſomething terrible! —Tell me."

Harwood pauſed an inſtant. "My deareſt Sibilla, it is out of our power, I fear. Ethelreda—" ſaid he, catching her in his arms to prevent her from falling. "Stop, one moment, let me gueſs!" cried ſhe, with an air that cannot be deſcribed, "She's dead!" Harwood ſhrunk from the truth: he dared not venture to confirm it. "She's in Carloville's power," cried he, "and I go to St. Siffrid's."

"Go this inſtant!—this moment!—Go tell him—tell him we are very rich—Offer him money—any thing—But is he covetous?—Oh, my dear Harwood! when we were together we were happy without riches! Let us be ſo again."

"At

"At the expence of my whole fortune," ſaid Harwood. "But—" continued he, ſolemnly, "it is impoſſible! *He* cannot reſtore her—nor all the riches—"

"Tell me not of impoſſibilities!" cried ſhe, in the moſt animated tone—"I will go myſelf immediately."

"No, no!" repeated Harwood: hear me, "Sibilla."

"I have no ears, nó ſenſes."

"I will go—but let me ſpeak."

"To-day—promiſe me to-day—I cannot bear a moment's ſuſpenſe."

Harwood, finding it impoſſible to change the ſubject, did promiſe, and then entreated her to hear the reaſons he had to offer againſt his immediate departure. Theſe however only related to herſelf, and her ſituation at Southampton. Harwood was averſe to leaving her alone in an inn, and wiſhed to ſtay till he could procure a houſe; which was not immediately to be done, as all were occupied.

But Mrs. Harwood's anxiety would admit of no delay; and conſidering nothing that concerned herſelf of any conſequence, compared to the errand on which ſhe ſuppoſed Mr. Harwood was going, ſhe ſtill inſiſted on his keeping his promiſe the next day at fartheſt. Accordingly on the next day he departed; certain that he could not return with any conſoling accounts, and that all the ſatisfaction he could poſſibly procure would be the melancholy one of knowing that Ethelreda was for ever beyond the reach of her perſecutor.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

He ſeem'd in running to devour the way,
Staying no longer queſtion.

SHAKESPEARE.

CONWAY and Fitz-Piers, though not leſs intereſted in overtaking Carloville, were leſs fortunate in tracking him than Caerleon had been. They were unanimous in ſuppoſing he and Lady Mariamne had croſſed the Severn, and conſequently took the ſame route. Fitz-Piers was of opinion that his couſin had made for Briſtol, with an intent to get on boad ſome of the coaſting veſſels, as leſs liable to diſcovery than going by land. Conway concurred with him entirely, and, when they reached Newport, propoſed hiring a boat and going down the Channel, in order to diſcover if they were on board any of the veſſels lying there ready to ſail. To this ſcheme Pitz-Piers objected, and, with more ſhow of ſucceſs, deſired to proceed to the Paſſage; where they ſhould learn if any people had croſſed whoſe appearance correſponded with thoſe they were purſuing. Here they were told that a tall young lady in a veil had waited in a poſt-chaiſe till the paſſing-boat was ready to ſail, in which ſhe embarked with a companion. By means of large promiſes, Conway preſently procured a boat, too impatient to wait till the other returned. But both himſelf and Fitz-Piers were

were painfully disappointed, that the most minute enquiries were unavailing towards tracing them particularly any further: they could only learn that all the passengers had taken the road to Bristol; and thither they followed them, neither fatigued nor dubious of success, till, as they approached the city, it occurred to Fitz-Piers, that, in so large a place, to search for or trace an unknown individual was a scheme equally wild and fruitless. The same idea had suggested itself to Conway, who, when Fitz-Piers mentioned his doubts, was half at a loss how to answer them, and, after pausing for a moment, could only propose going on board all the vessels ready to sail, under a pretence of curiosity.

Fitz-Piers agreed; having nothing to suggest in return for the many objections he could have raised, but which he cautiously avoided, lest Conway should suspect him of leaning towards Carloville, and of wishing to detach him from the pursuit; for which he perceived, to his utter astonishment, Conway's ardour was undiminished. In reality, he began to fear his cousin's flight had been planned and effected with too masterly a hand to be interrupted by Conway, whom, from the specimen of his disposition he had seen in their very short acquaintance, he judged to be as ardent, rash, and unsuspecting, as he knew the other to be deep, artful, and wary. As for himself, he was so conscious of his own inferiority to his cousin in wiles, that he relied entirely on Conway; whom he no soon percived to be neither cool nor artful, than he relinquished his hopes, which were still less sanguine from the expedition of Sir Francis and Lord Caerleon; whom he looked upon, in affairs where con-

duct

duct and judgment were concerned, as little better than two ſchool-boys. He ſtill, however, for his own honour, conſidered it neceſſary to accompany Conway in his ſearch, to whatever extravagant exceſs he ſhould chooſe to carry it; for, as a relation of Carloville, and heretofore a participator in moſt of his follies, he dreaded extremely leſt by the world's report, as an abettor of the preſent outrage, he ſhould unjuſtly ſuffer in his character, which he had no other equally efficacious mode of vindicating.

It was almoſt morning when they reached Briſtol, and Conway would willingly have adjourned from his carriage to the quays; but Fitz-Piers, who ardently longed to take ſome repoſe after his rapid journey, having uſed many arguments to convince him that no time could poſſibly be loſt by ſleeping till day-break, at laſt prevailed; and he conſented to poſtpone his ſearch an hour or two, after having learned, upon enquiry, that all the veſſels were wind-bound in the road. Not for weeks and months had Conway paſſed a night in ſleep ſo undiſturbed and calm, as the few ſhort hours he allowed himſelf more in conſideration of his companion's fatigue than his own; and which his extraordinary ſpirits made him conſider as an indulgence, rather than a neceſſary refreſhment.

Notwithſtanding Conway's impatience the preceding evening to continue his ſearch, he ſlept to ſo late an hour the next day, in conſequence of the innumerable anxieties and extreme fatigues he had ſo lately ſuffered, that it was near mid-day before Fitz-Piers, who was ſtill leſs wakeful, began to think of joining his friend, who impatiently waited for him. He

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ſtood ſome moments looking through the window of an upper room into the court of the inn, where ſome of the oſtlers were aſſembled round a man, who, leaping from his horſe, aſſiſted in ſaddling another, which he inſtantly mounted, and in a moment departed. The extreme haſte of the man reminded Conway of his own urgent buſineſs; and, reſolved to loſe no more time in waiting, he left a meſſage for Fitz-Piers with a waiter whom he had met on the ſtairs holding the cover of a letter in his hand, the ſeal of which he was attentively conſidering. Whilſt Conway was yet ſpeaking Fitz-Piers joined him, and, accidentally caſting his eyes towards the letter and perceiving the ſeal, impetuouſly ſnatching it from the man's hand, ſaw it was directed to Lord Carloville. Upon enquiry he learnt that it had fallen from the pocket of the ſtranger whom Conway had juſt ſeen depart, and who in his haſte had not noticed the loſs of it. Fitz-Piers ſaid nothing to Conway, nor did he give him time to ſpeak, but, ordering horſes inſtantly, ſeized him by the arm and deſcended with him to mount them; and Conway, now fully comprehending that in the owner of the letter Pitz-Piers had diſcovered his couſin, thought only of enquiring, if it were poſſible, what road the precipitate ſtranger had taken. The people who ſtood at the door of the inn could give but vague directions —though ſome, of whom he had aſked a a queſtion or two concerning the tides, had out of curioſity followed him to the firſt gate out of the city.

Not however diſpirited at the ſtill very uncertain ſucceſs of his undertaking, Conway recommenced his purſuit—animated with the hope of ſeizing Carloville, and delivering him up

up to Caerleon and Sir Francis L'Eſterling—not doubting but the former at leaſt would take a ſignal revenge. To Fitz-Piers, who was entirely ignorant of the particular manner in which Conway was intereſted in the ſecuring of Carloville's perſon, the extreme eagerneſs with which he ſought to give him up to the fury of his relations, carried with it an appearance of vindictive ſpirit very far from the natural diſpoſition of Conway; who, if he had allowed himſelf a moment's reflection, muſt have perceived that his interference was altogether un-warrantable, and highly blameable; ſince he muſt have been conſcious it did not belong to him to chaſtiſe the affront offered to Sir Francis L'Eſterling, and that, in ſeeking to deliver Carloville up to Lord Caerleon, he put his life in the power of a man of ungovernable paſſions, who had ſworn to repair the honour of his family by conſulting only his revenge.

The people who went in purſuit of the imagined murderer of Sir Francis L'Eſterling had no kind of difficulty at firſt in tracking Carloville, whoſe perſon could be accurately deſcribed in very few words, and which it was impoſſible not to remark. But he had gained materially in point of diſtance, though the time was ſo inconſiderable between his flight and the commencement of the purſuit, that they expected to overtake him at every ſtage; and by that means were ſtill led on to follow him to the neareſt town upon the coaſt, to which they concluded he would direct his flight, and from thence gain the Continent.

Carloville, who was too ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with the idea of the penalties annexed to the atrocious deeds in which he had been

ſo deeply concerned, not to know that his preſervation entirely depended on his eſcape, from the moment of his departure had regulated his proceedings under every poſſible alteration of circumſtances. His preſence of mind in this extremity did not forſake him; and knowing he ſhould be inſtantly overtaken at Southampton, if he made for that place as the neareſt, he changed his original intention, and, inſtead of continuing his journey, returned by a different road in order to embark at ſome other port—whilſt his purſuers, no longer able to trace him, would conclude he was already out of the kingdom. It was now his intention to make for Ireland, where he meant to conceal himſelf for ſome time; he conſequently directed his ſteps towards Briſtol; which, notwithſtanding all his foreſight, was the place, as it proved, he ought moſt to have avoided.

CHAP. XXI.

But chief behold around the rattling board
The civil robbers ranged!——

THOMSON.

MR. Harwood, who had never entertained doubts concerning the fate of Ethelreda, ſet out on his journey for Wales, with a heart and ſpirits equally depreſſed from paſt events and future expectations. Nothing but abſolute neceſſity, and ſuch he judged there was of ſeeing Carloville, could have prevailed on him to

to overcome the repugnance he felt at returning to a place which could only create ſorrowful ſentiments, joined to thoſe of diſguſt and hatred at being obliged to ſee and converſe with a man for whom he had always entertained a peculiar degree of abhorrence;—the Caſtle too, which he had regarded with reverence, deſerted by the family of L'Eſterling, and become the reſidence of a wretch who had treated the daughter of the good Sir Roger ſo unworthily!

The Harwoods had always been on terms of friendly intercourſe with the family at Strathener Caſtle; and it was no ſooner known that Mr. Harwood was in the neighbourhood, than the intelligence was carried to Mr. Conway, now almoſt its only inhabitant; for Lord Trecaſtle only continued to breathe, and Mrs. Conway lay almoſt without hope of recovery, in a delirious fever from the morning when ſhe received the alarming relation of her ſon's extravagant behaviour. Glad of any relief from his own tormenting reflections, and the torturing ſuſpenſe he had ſuffered from the day of Conway's marriage with Lady Octavia, now the third he had paſſed in almoſt uninterruptedly pondering on the pernicious conſequences of all his laboured ſchemes, and under inceſſant dread of hearing his terrible ſuſpicions confirmed, he diſpatched his preſſing entreaties to Mr. Harwood, requeſting to ſee him at Strathener whilſt his affairs detained him in Wales. Harwood, who expected no leſs, acquainted as he was with the accuſtomed hoſpitality, was much ſurpriſed that the invitation did not come from Lord Trecaſtle. From Mr. Conway, however, he preſently learned the cauſe, as well as the whole chain of extraordinary events

which had contributed to Lord Trecaſtle's illneſs. With this detail the account of Lady Octavia's marriage with Conway was neceſſarily connected; both of which, to Harwood, were not the leaſt ſurpriſing parts of the relation. Of Ethelreda's death Mr. Conway could give no particular account, ſince nothing more than the mere circumſtance, as related in the newſpapers and magazines, had ever tranſpired.

Harwood regretted his loſt trouble, when he found to how little purpoſe his journey had been performed. Though he did not relinquiſh his intention of meeting Carloville, yet he concluded it would be vain to attempt it at preſent, whilſt he was flying from the rage of the injured ralations of Lady Mariamne; whoſe profligate conduct he heard of without much ſurpriſe or concern, ſince ſhe always appeared indiſcriminately a woman of moſt unamiable manners, and her implacable enmity to Ethelreda was perfectly well known to him, as well as to Mrs. Harwood. As for Carloville, no crime however heinous could poſſibly have added to the deſpicable opinion and the ſupreme degree of hatred which Harwood entertained for him.

It was his intention, notwithſtanding Mr. Conway's preſſing entreaties, to return to Mrs. Harwood immediately, to whom he was impatient to relate all that had ſo recently happened amongſt their old acquaintance, in which, as relations of the L'Eſterlings, they were rather concerned: and judging his ſtay was perfectly unneceſſary, he preferred returning, for many reaſons, to giving any intelligence by the poſt. Theſe reſolutions were made on the day of his arrival at Strathener, which he intended leaving

ing the next morning, when a letter to Mr. Conway from Lord Caerleon arrived, giving an account of Sir Francis L'Eſterling's death, though not circumſtantially: no mention whatever was made of Lady Mariamne, but Lord Caerleon informed his uncle he ſhould be at Strathener as the next day.

Mr. Conway, whoſe ſpirits were before ſunk to a very low ebb, could not bear this terrible piece of intelligence with any degree of compoſure, and ſeemed particularly ſhocked at the accumulated diſtreſs Lord Caerleon would feel at being made acquainted with his father's melancholy illneſs and the flight of his ſecond ſiſter; imploring Mr. Harwood to ſtay and make the diſcovery to his nephew, whom he declared he had not reſolution to ſee. To leave a family ſo peculiarly diſtreſſed, when his aſſiſtance was only begged for a ſingle day, Harwood was not capable; he therefore conſented to wait Lord Caerleon's arrival, and did every thing in his power to relieve the deſpondence of Mr. Conway, which ſeemed totally to have changed his character.

Amidſt the aſtoniſhing variety of ideas that preſented themſelves to the mind of Harwood, on hearing events ſo extraordinary, in which too he was ſo intimately concerned, it might be ſuppoſed the vaſt additional fortune he ſhould acquire by the death of Sir Francis L'Eſterling would have occurred to him, and that he would have been anxious to communicate the account to Mrs. Harwood: but in lamenting his death, which he did moſt ſincerely, Harwood never once recollected he ſhould be enriched by it; and concluding Mrs. Harwoood would ſuffer extreme diſappointment at receiving a letter which could contain no information whatever

of Ethelreda, he ſtill deferred writing, in the hope of ſpeedily joining his family.

After a day of anxiety and impatience to Harwood, of dread and apprehenſions to Mr. Conway, towards evening Lord Caerleon arrived. The latter no ſooner heard the ſound of the carriage approaching, than he abruptly quitted the room, making a ſign to Mr. Harwood to remain and receive Lord Caerleon, who preſently made his appearance. Fatigued, exhauſted, haggard, and depreſſed, he walked ſlowly into the room, and, perceiving Mr. Harwood, with much ſurpriſe ſtepped back, and in rather a forbidding tone exclaimed, "Mr. Harwood here already?" inſtantly concluding he came as the heir of Sir Francis L'Eſterling: a want of feeling that forcibly ſtruck him.

Harwood, who was not leſs delicate than tenacious, was equally ſurpriſed and vexed at his manner, which placed him in the light of an intruder to his own inconvenience. "Excuſe me, Lord Caerleon!" ſaid he, "circumſtances in which you are particularly concerned—"

"I underſtand you, Sir!" ſaid Caerleon, interrupting him in the ſame tone; "you come here as the heir of Sir Francis L'Eſterling."

"I wiſh your Lordſhip would allow me to make a proper apology for being found in your houſe, as that appears to me to be what diſpleaſes you," ſaid Harwood haughtily. "I came into this country on buſineſs of my own," continued he, "and I ſtay at Mr. Conway's entreaty, having undertaken the unpleaſant office of diſcloſing to your lordſhip—"

"What! You mean to proſecute—"

"Pray

"Pray give me leave!" ſaid Harwood impatiently;—"I am ſorry that I have undertaken to inform your lordſhip that Lord Trecaſtle is dangerouſly ill, and that Lady Octavia Conway has been miſſing ſince the night of your Lordſhip's departure." Then, ſlightly bowing, Harwood was leaving the room; when Caerleon, catching his hand, exclaimed in a voice of deep diſtreſs, "Pray ſtay, Harwood!—if but for half an hour, ſtay to convince me that you do not reſent my petulance." Without anſwering, Harwood inſtantly ſat down; whilſt Caerleon with a diſturbed manner walked about the room. "My father dangerouſly ill!—and Octavia gone!" ſaid he, turning to Harwood—"Poor Sir Francis! May I aſk, Mr. Harwood, if you mean to proſecute?"

"You ſeem to think, Lord Caerleon," ſaid Harwood with ſome ſurpriſe, "that I come here merely to interfere in the private concerns of your family! Nothing can be more remote from my intentions, or my character: I need not remind you that you are more nearly related to Sir Francis L'Eſterling by marriage than I am."

"But you muſt know, Sir, that your wife is his heir."

"You oblige me now to recollect it," ſaid Harwood; "but it is ſo long ſince I have ceaſed to conſider myſelf as intereſted in that eſtate, that I proteſt I had forgotten the clauſe in favour of the female branch."

"Not then knowing how to receive your directions time enough, I have already ordered the body to be brought to St. Siffrid's Caſtle; but every thing that remains to be done you can now perſonally tranſact."

"I muſt entreat you to allow me to continue my journey to-morrow; I have already conſiderably exceeded my firſt intention."

"And on my account!" exclaimed Caerleon.—"You will not forgive me then, though I entreat you to pardon the rudeneſs with which I accoſted you? You know not how much I am intereſted to prevail on you to ſtay; I mean, that it is utterly impoſſible for me to offer you my ſervices in tranſacting my buſineſs.—Here is my father—and this other unfortunate girl: I muſt entreat you to aſſiſt me in keeping Sir Francis's death concealed from him, at leaſt for ſome time."

Mr. Conway had now collected reſolution enough to ſee his nephew—Caerleon heard from him a repetition of the circumſtances already briefly related by Harwood, with the additional one of Mrs. Conway's illneſs: and ſcarcely did he ſuffer more in hearing the relation, than Mr. Conway in making it; for no aggravation, apparently, ſeemed wanting to fill up the meaſure of diſtreſs with which every individual was overloaded.

Though Harwood felt ſome curioſity to know how the unfortunate Sir Francis had received his death, reſpect for Caerleon's feelings, whoſe agitation at mentioning his name was evident, with-held him from hazarding a ſingle queſtion; though he anxiouſly wiſhed to know when the body would arrive, that he might fix the day of his return to Mrs. Harwood, to whom he intended writing immediately, after having made repeated efforts, but in vain, to depart before the interment.

On the evening of the next day (a day of augmented grief to all the family, on account of Dr. Felton's fears for Mrs. Conway, whom he

he attended), a meſſenger, who preceded the body of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, arrived at Strathener, to inform Lord Caerleon, as he had ordered, that the hearſe was within a few miles of the Caſtle. Amidſt the confuſion and horror this melancholy event had raiſed in the mind of Caerleon, he had forgotten to make any preparations for the funeral, which he rather wiſhed to be private; but thinking it was now become neceſſary that Harwood ſhould give his own directions, he mentioned the plan he had originally laid down, which was that of placing the body in the family vault as privately as poſſible, and as ſoon as it arrived.

Harwood, who could not comprehend why ſo much privacy was neceſſary, ſince he had never been given to underſtand that Sir Francis died a violent death by his own hands, would have requeſted to know why Lord Caerleon had fixed on a plan ſo contrary to the cuſtom of each family, which invariably on ſuch occaſions diſplayed with the moſt pompous oſtentation its anceſtry and wealth, had he not been prepoſſeſſed with an idea, that for him even to have aſked the reaſon would have carried with it an appearance of aſſuming an authority ſuperior to that of Lord Caerleon, whom he conſidered as the neareſt relation of the deceaſed: and accordingly himſelf, Lord Caerleon, and Mr. Conway departed for St. Siffrid's, to receive for the laſt time the moſt unfortunate lord of it.

On driving into the Caſtle-court, ſome ſervants, who heard the ſound of the carriage, ran out with lights, probably expecting it was Lord Carloville returned. At firſt Harwood would have alighted at the hall-door; but on approaching it, and perceiving by the ſound of voices

voices and ſinging, and the light that blazed through the windows, it was in the poſſeſſion of Lord Carloville's gueſts, he ordered the ſervant who attended to ſhew him another entrance. With an inſolent air of aſtoniſhment at the authority which this ſtranger aſſumed, the men preceded them to another apartment, when one was diſpatched by Harwood to bring him implements for writing, and the other went to give an account of theſe intruders to the gentlemen in the hall.

With the perſons of Lord Caerleon and Mr. Conway, though no viſitors of Lord Carloville, they were well acquainted; and, gueſſing that their buſineſs concerned Lady Mariamne, the ſpirit of curioſity taking place of faro, they gave up play to queſtion the ſervant, and penetrate, if poſſible, the motives that had brought them from Strathener ſo late in a diſmal ſtormy night. Whilſt the ſervant was deſcribing the perſon of Mr. Harwood, whom none of them knew, another brought a ſheet of paper, which he placed on one of the tables, before which ſat Sir Dennis Caſtlebar, half drunk, roaring ſomething like a tune at the height of his voice, by way of triumph over the ſcattered remains of the dice-box, which his adverſary had juſt ſacrificed to his diſappointment. Sir Dennis made two or three attempts to read the paper as it lay before him; but his ſight being rather confuſed as well as his ſenſes, he called to the ſervant—"Here! you ſerving man—lacquey—livery-man—read this bulletin—Do you underſtand me?—Here, 'tis a gentleman's hand—I never could read a gentleman's hand in my life!"

The man did as he was ordered, and read aloud: "Lord Caerleon, for very particular

cular reaſons, requeſts the gentlemen will remove to another apartment of the Caſtle."

"Who?" cried ſome of the company—"Lord Caerleon!" repeated others—"What right has he to turn us out?" aſked all in a breath.—"He will find it ſomewhat—curſed difficult—hard—to eject me!" ſaid Caſtlebar ſcarcely articulating.

In the midſt of the tumult a rumbling noiſe was heard in the court, and preſently ſome men entered the hall bearing the coffin of Sir Francis L'Eſterling on their ſhoulders.

"Where ſhall we ſet down the corpſe?" ſaid one of them to the others, looking around him on all ſides.

At the ſound of the word "corpſe," the whole party, ſtaggering, running, and rolling, cleared the room in an inſtant, leaving the laſt arrived in full poſſeſſion.

Caerleon no ſooner underſtood they were gone than he haſtened with Mr. Harwood and Mr. Conway to join the ſmall funeral, which he had propoſed ſhould proceed through the Caſtle-gardens, and reach the Church by means of the nailed gate of the Myrtle-garden. A very little time was neceſſary to arrange the order of theſe unadorned obſequies. Without any magnificent decorations, or even a name on his coffin, his ſplendid and highly-prized eſcutcheon unemblazoned, his ancient deſcent unnoticed, with a funeral proceſſion compoſed of but three perſons, in ſilence and obſcurity Sir Francis L'Eſterling, the laſt of a line which had been traced beyond the kings of Jeruſalem, for ever departed from the mouldering manſion of his anceſtors.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

L'ultima che ſi perde è la ſperanza.

METASTASIO.

THOUGH Ethelreda never doubted the ſincerity of Conway's attachment to her, ſhe knew not how to reconcile with it his marriage with Octavia, and blamed her own want of preſence of mind, which had prevented her from making him explain his motives when he urged her ſo paſſionately to leave the Caſtle with him; and which in appearance ſhe conſented to do, chooſing rather to incur the chance of diſcovering herſelf to Carloville, if by that means ſhe might reſtore Conway to his friends, and prevent him from putting his terrible deſigns in execution. Yet he knew not how to account for the almoſt inſtantaneous change in his manners when he left her on the battlements with ſuch ſtrong forebodings of better fortune, ſince nothing ſhe thought could invalidate that raſh marriage with Octavia, which had driven him to deſpair, and which Ethelreda herſelf began to ſee for the firſt time in the light of an additional calamity; and the ſmall ray of Conway's hopes, which had pierced through the gloomy proſpect of her life, was again obſcured. The neceſſity of ſeeking out ſome other aſylum preſented itſelf, but ſhe could fix on nothing: if ſhe quitted the Caſtle,

Caſtle, ſhe knew ſhe ſhould never more ſee Conway; if ſhe ſtayed, ſhe preſaged a repetition of that ſcene in which ſhe had expoſed herſelf to ſo many misfortunes.

Unuſed to liſten, it was ſome time before theſe melancholy meditations were interrupted by the tolling of the funeral-bell. It was night. Ethelreda ſtarted as the firſt ſound that ſtruck her ear; no one had been interred ſo late in the Church of St. Siffrid, ſince her father's death: ſhe could form no idea of who this could be—but determined, if poſſible, to ſee, ſhe ſearched her way through the paſſages, directed by the vibration of the bell to that which led to the Church, which ſhe cautiouſly entered.

The grave-digger had juſt taken the candle out of his lanthorn, to ſee more clearly into the grave he had been opening, when Ethelreda ventured to approach a little, and perceived it was the vault of her family. She ſtepped back ſeveral paces in amazement; ſhe concluded it might be preparing for Carloville: —it was impoſſible ſhe could think of the death of that man, whoſe life and morals were ſo well known to her, without horror; nor could ſhe endure the thought of ſeeing him placed under the ſame ſtone that covered the remains of her own family. Almoſt ſuffocated with her emotions, but not daring to breathe, Ethelreda made towards the porch.

Preſently the garden-door, which was oppoſite to it, opened; and ſhe ſaw, by the light of lanthorns which the under-bearers carried, the funeral approaching. She glided into one of the aiſles as they drew near, and, looking earneſtly at them as they paſſed, clearly diſtinguiſhed Mr. Conway and Lord Caerleon.

The

The ſilence—the time of night—the obſcure and myſterious privacy of this interment—and above all, the preſence of Mr. Conway, made every explanation to the diſtracted Ethelreda. It was not Carloville, but Conway they were carrying to his grave—Conway had laid violent hands on his own life, and in dying had entreated to be buried there.

The lanthorns did not caſt a ray of light two feet from its centre. Ethelreda wrapped herſelf from head to foot in ſome of the black drapery they had thrown off the Coffin, and came within a little diſtance of the vault. ſilent as death itſelf.

The grave-digger, addreſſing one of the gentlemen, declared there was not room for the reception of another corpſe in the preſent ſtate of the vault. "He muſt be taken to Strathener, then!" ſaid Caerleon.

"He ſhall not be buried any where but here!" ſaid Harwood: "Let the ſervice be read, and let them enlarge the vault afterwards; it may be done in the courſe of the night." It was agreed to, and the ſervice began.

A piercing ſigh, or rather groan, made them all tremble.—"Who was that?" ſaid Mr. Morgan the clergyman, interrupting himſelf.

"Huſh!—Go on!" ſaid Harwood.

Ethelreda, alarmed, retreated towards the chancel; but, unable to reſtrain them, her ſighs became deeper and more piercing. They all followed the ſounds of diſtreſs, in horror little inferior to hers; but ſhe, wrapped in impenetrable darkneſs, ſunk behind the altar-piece, and, falling on the ſteps of the vaulted paſſage, for a few moments her miſeries and lamentations were ſuſpended.

Diſmayed

Diſmayed and aſtoniſhed, they followed but a few paces, and inſtantly returned to the grave. The ſervice was finiſhed in ſilence; and the three gentlemen, immediately leaving the church, ſtepped into the carriage that brought them, and returned to Strathener, ordering the ſexton and his attendants to work upon the vault, which they expected would be cloſed up before the morning.

But they were no ſooner gone than the ſexton and grave-digger prepared to go too, determined upon no account whatever to ſtay there all night to liſten to the groans, but to reſume their work early in the morning. They had gathered up their ſpades and mattocks, the ſurplice, prayer-book, and black gowns, when the pall was diſcovered to be miſſing. It was ſearched for in every part of the church, but in vain: the concern and wonder of the ſexton and his colleague increaſed—the ſexton declared the price of a velvet pall was more than he was worth—and the grave-digger endeavoured to comfort him by ſaying it would never be wanted again, ſince the laſt of the knights of the Caſtle had certainly taken it with him. No perſuaſion was wanting to make the ſexton concur in this belief; and reſolving to make no mention of the loſs, they all left the Church petrified with fear and aſtoniſhment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

More needs ſhe the divine, than the phyſician.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILST Harwood was employed in the melancholy office of attending the remains of Sir Francis L'Eſterling to the grave, Mrs. Harwood told every hour ſince his departure, in anxious expectation of hearing news of Ethelreda by the firſt poſt that could arrive; and had already determined, as ſoon as ſhe received the information, to meet her on the road and proceed on their journey into Weſtmoreland. With her mind full of this deſign Mrs. Harwood roſe early, and was preparing to follow her children in their morning walk, when one of their ſervants, both of whom had lived with her at the Caſtle, ran back to entreat her miſtreſs to come and ſee a lady in great diſtreſs, who ſhe ſaid was ſo like Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling it muſt be herſelf. Without ſtopping to queſtion the ſervant, improbable as the ſtory appeared, Mrs. Harwood inſtantly followed her to the door. At a little diſtance from it ſtood a cart: round it ſeveral people were gathered; amongſt them two or three gentlemen were trying to diſengage the unfortunate Lady Mariamne from its wheels, which ſhe clung to with the agony of terror, and all the ſtrength of delirium. Mrs. Harwood inſtantly knew her—but, too aſtoniſhed

a;

at her appearance and the ſtrangeneſs of her ſituation, ſhe was for a moment at a loſs for words to addreſs her, or the perſons ſurrounding her:—"For Heaven's ſake! Lady Mariamne, tell me what has happened to you!" cried Mrs. Harwood at laſt—"What can have occaſioned your being here alone in this diſtreſs?—Where is Sir Francis?—Can I aſſiſt you?"

At hearing her own name, Lady Mariamne fixed her wild eyes on Mrs. Harwood, and told her, in an impatient tone, ſhe ſhould be careful how ſhe anſwered—ſhe was perfectly aware of her intentions.

"You do my intentions great injuſtice, Lady Mariamne!" ſaid Mrs. Harwood a little hurt; "but perhaps," continued ſhe, "you do not recollect me ſince my illneſs—Sir Francis's couſin—Mr. Harwood is not—"

"I recollect you perfectly!" cried ſhe, ſternly interrupting her; "I recollect your ſiſter too!—Sir Francis's couſins!—Ha, ha! I believe Sir Francis and his couſins would have ſome difficulty to know each other again!—— I wonder which is moſt altered, he or Ethelreda!"—and again ſhe burſt into a loud laugh.

It was now that Mrs. Harwood perceived the derangement of her faculties: ſhe by turns interrogated the people round her, but could gain no other information than the owner of the cart had been able to gather from the broken and unconnected ſentences uttered by Lady Mariamne; and ſhe herſelf, with a ſtern countenance and haughty tone, refuſed to anſwer a ſingle queſtion, peremptorily declaring ſhe would accompany her guide and no other. The man, on whom the poſſeſſion of the valuable pocket-book began to have ſome effect,

effect, was now very well inclined to favour her intention of proceeding with him, in ſpite of the earneſt entreaties of Mrs. Harwood, whoſe compaſſion and fears for the unhappy creature became more powerful at the apprehenſion of ſeeing her depart alone, to go ſhe knew not whither, in the power of a ſtranger, and in the delirium of a fever apparently brought on by anguiſh of mind.

One of the gentlemen, who had forborne to ſpeak from the moment Mrs. Harwood addreſſed the ſtrange lady by her name, perceiving the earneſtneſs with which the former endeavoured to prevail on her to ſtay, and that the driver of the cart took a contrary ſide, now advanced towards Mrs. Harwood, and calling her by her name—"I ought to apologize to you, madam, for the liberty I take in addreſſing you—My name is Carloville, the brother of Lord Carloville; and this gentleman," pointing on his right, "is Mr. Almerſly, an intimate acquaintance of Lord Caerleon. Will you ſuffer us to aſſiſt in conveying Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling to the inn?—My friend is unfortunate in being introduced under ſuch bad auſpices!" continued Mr. Carloville with a half a ſigh, perceiving Mrs. Harwood's troubled countenance, and that ſhe did not anſwer.

"I beg you to pardon my inattention, gentlemen!" ſaid Mrs. Harwood, trying to ſpeak with ſome compoſure—"I am highly obliged to you—I truſt Lady Mariamne to your care." The man now delivered the pocket-book into the hands of Mr. Carloville. Mrs. Harwood, from her own purſe, ſatisfied him for his trouble, and, not without ſome violence and exertion, Lady Mariamne was conveyed to the inn.

inn. Both her ſtrength and ſpirits now evidently began to ſink—ſhe was carried to a chamber, and, before the arrival of the phyſician, her voice grew ſo languid and inarticulate that no intelligible ſound could be heard from her lips, notwithſtanding the many efforts ſhe made to ſpeak to Mrs. Harwood, on whom ſhe fixed her eyes without intermiſſion. The phyſician gave no deciſive opinion of her caſe; but, deſiring ſhe might not be diſturbed, Mrs. Harwood left the room, hoping, when ſhe had retired from her ſight, ſhe would ſleep.

Mr. Carloville and Mrs. Almerſly waited Mrs. Harwood's return, and both entreated to be employed in any manner ſhe could poſſibly ſuggeſt, either in her ſervice, or that of Lady Mariamne.

Prepoſſeſſed as ſhe was ſo juſtly againſt the name of Carloville, a name ſhe could ſcarcely endure to hear repeated, ſhe at firſt coolly but politely declined troubling either him or Mr. Almerſly any farther:—ſhe glanced her eyes towards Mr. Carloville as ſhe repeated her thanks, and, perceiving him colour with mortification and diſappointment, ſhe ſtammered, heſitated, and wiſhed to retract a refuſal which ſeemed ſo mortifying.

"I ſee it is in vain to combat prejudices ſo well-founded—An opportunity that I have ſought ſo aſſiduouſly—" repeated Mr. Carloville in a tone of vexation. "Good day to you, madam," bowing low as he approached the door.

"Stay, ſir!" cried Mrs. Harwood. "Shall I encroach too much on your time, or Mr. Almerſly's, if I trouble you to acquaint Lord Caerleon by a letter, that his ſiſter is here, and carefully attended?—The whole family

muſt neceſſarily be under great alarm at miſſing her."

"You do me much honour, madam," ſaid Mr. Carloville;—"with pleaſure.—Believe me, Mrs. Harwood, I have long wiſhed for the acquaintance of your family."

"Ah! you remind me of things not pleaſant!" ſaid Mrs. Harwood, turning away her face in tears.

"I am too unfortunate!" exclaimed he, and immediately departed.

CHAP. XXIV.

What fooliſh boldneſs brought thee to their mercies,
Whom thou in terms ſo bloody and ſo dear
Haſt made thine enemies?

SHAKESPEARE.

CONWAY and Fitz-Piers, deſerted by the people in the ſtreet, purſued the man whom they ſuppoſed to be Carloville, through the neareſt gate. In a few moments, notwithſtanding the advantage the fugitive had of his purſuers, they, who ſpared neither themſelves nor their horſes, were within ſight of the man whom Conway had juſt ſeen at the inn. He appeared to ſlacken his ſpeed as he approached a little village not far from the old walls of the city. "That is the man!" cried Conway.

"That

"That is Carloville then," anſwered Fitz-Piers, "if ever I ſaw him in my life!"

"In another moment I'll ſecure him!" exclaimed Conway, and began to ſpur his horſe.

"Stop!—I charge you!—Do not irritate him to any act of raſhneſs; he may be armed, though we are not."

"Am I to ſuffer him to eſcape then, when I have him in my power?" aſked Conway, angrily.

"Suffer me to follow him, and ſpeak to him firſt. I dread your impetuoſity."

"I ſee you think me not to be truſted, and treat me like a child; but do not ſuppoſe I ſhall ſuffer you to run the riſque of encountering him alone."

"I do not deſire it," ſaid Fitz-Piers; "I only entreat you to be calm, or leave Carloville to me entirely." Whilſt he was yet ſpeaking, the perſon before them leaped from his horſe over a hedge, and ran acroſs towards a cottage at a little diſtance. Conway and Fitz-Piers inſtantly followed, and with ſuch rapidity that he whom they purſued had ſcarcely entered the houſe, when Conway, who ruſhed firſt after him, ſeized the piſtols he was taking from his pockets, and, telling him he could not eſcape, would have given him in charge to Fitz-Piers whilſt he himſelf went for the officers of juſtice.

Fitz-Piers, apprehenſive, from the violence of both their characters, of ſome deſperate attempt, ſtepped between them, and, taking the piſtols out of Conway's hands, would have diſcharged them, when, at the appearance of a woman whom their noiſe had brought from the room above, they dropped from his hands, and

and he ſtood motionleſs, with his eyes fixed on Carloville.

As for Carloville, all idea of eſcape ſeemed to have deſerted him; his countenance varied in colour and expreſſion, and he appeared to ſuffer all the agonies of ſhame and remorſe. The woman ſeemed not leſs agitated at the ſight of him, than Fitz-Piers at ſeeing her: ſhe looked at them both with the moſt piercing and anxious expreſſion in her countenance, and ſtepping towards Carloville with a tottering pace, attempted to reach the hand which Fitz-Piers involuntarily held out to her: but from weakneſs ſhe would have fallen on the floor, had he not caught her in his arms.

"I have done this!"—cried Carloville, in a voice that made even Conway tremble.

"You—*you*, Carloville?"—ſaid Fitz-Piers in agony.

"What!" cried Conway, "Fitz-Piers, what does this mean?"

"Let me go—I will not ſtay to hear her ſpeak!" cried Carloville, making towards the door; "I have too many accuſations to anſwer elſewhere."

"I will not accuſe you," ſaid the woman, opening her half-cloſed eyes at the ſound of his voice:—"You may go—I will never follow you with one reproach."

"Have I deſerved this of you?—has ſhe?" ſaid Fitz-Piers, fixing his eyes ſternly on his couſin; then turning away in diſguſt—"I have loved this man—and this puniſhment I have earned."

"Tell me, Fitz-Piers, what this means. Who is this Lady?" ſaid Conway, in a voice more expreſſive of concern than curioſity.

"I'll

"I'll not hear another word—let me begone!" cried Carloville, ſtamping as he ſpoke.

"You ſhall not move—you ſhall anſwer your accuſers here," reiterated Conway, as he forcibly held him.

"What!—Have I murdered your brother?—have I deceived your ſiſter?—have I ſtolen your wife?" cried Carloville, with frantic rapidity.

"Worſe!—A thouſand times worſe!" cried Conway, almoſt equally agitated.

"Cruel!—Inhuman!—to follow me—to expoſe me to the world!—And you, Euſtace, whom I hoped never to have ſeen, who had long forgotten me!" ſaid the ſtranger, in tears.

"I ſeemed indeed to have forgotten you! I tried to forget you, or only remembered you with bitterneſs and reſentment," ſaid Fitz-Piers, in a relenting tone.

"Oh, my dear Euſtace!—I have deſerved your hatred! I dare not aſk you to pardon me—or him for my ſake—" pointing to Carloville.

"What is he to you, that you *dare* intercede for him?" ſaid Fitz-Piers with terrible ſternneſs.

"Nothing,"

"Nothing!—Seven years ago you were my wife," angrily exclaimed Carloville.

"*Your wife?*" ſaid Fitz-Piers.

"Seven years?" repeated Conway, retreating back ſeveral paces in aſtoniſhment.

The lady, releaſing herſelf from Fitz-Piers, would have ſprung towards him; but Carloville watching his opportunity, precipitately fled, and ſhe dropped fainting on the floor.

Conway, inſtantly raiſing her, would have followed Carloville; when Fitz-Piers, catching him by the arm, earneſtly entreated he would ſuffer him to eſcape, or at leaſt not conſtrain *him* to be inſtrumental in his puniſhment.—"He is amenable to the laws, leave him to them," ſaid he; "it will be more to your honour, and that of your family."

"I never had the remoteſt intention of puniſhing him myſelf," ſaid Conway calmly.—"He was married ſeven years ago to this lady," continued he, after a ſhort pauſe: "that is ſufficient."

"So I think," ſaid Fitz-Piers thoughtfully: "And it would appear vindictive and unfeeling in me to purſue him any farther: let his crimes be his puniſhment!—But it will be neceſſary to prove the marriage."

"How ſo?—He ſhall never live with his wife again," exclaimed Conway.

"No, never!" ſaid Fitz-Piers, looking with ſurpriſe at Conway—"But you will allow it is not the leſs neceſſary to vindicate the honour of his wife for her own ſake?"

Conway had forgotten for a moment that he alone knew of the exiſtence of Ethelreda; and recollecting that himſelf and Fitz-Piers were equally ignorant of the ſubject each ſuppoſed the other to be ſpeaking of, he was ſilent.

"Where, madam, were you married?" ſaid Fitz-Piers, addreſſing the lady, who, unable to anſwer, burſt into freſh tears.

"Do not diſtreſs her!" ſaid Conway compaſſionately. "What, Fitz-Piers, do you intend doing?"

"I know not," ſaid Fitz-Piers. "I cannot leave this diſtreſſed creature here: yet it is abſolutely neceſſary I ſhould not delay a moment; and

and till I can get her to hear me calmly, nothing can be done."

"I too," ſaid Conway, "muſt immediately return—this very night, if it be poſſible!"—and his eyes ſparkled with pleaſure and impatience as he ſpoke: "A thouſand reaſons urge it."

"You will not leave me?" ſaid Fitz-Piers reproachfully.

"No!" cried Conway, "nor muſt you leave me. Bring this lady with you; my mother ſhall meet her at Frampton, if ſhe wiſh for ſociety; I can diſpoſe of her, and of the Lodge."

"Do you think Mrs. Conway would have the goodneſs——"

"There is not a doubt of it," cried Conway, interrupting him: "Beſides, I have more than one *Mrs. Conway* at my diſpoſal."

"Whom do you mean?"

"My wife."

"Your wife? Lady Octavia?"

"No. What tempted you to utter that unpropitious name?" ſaid Conway, loſing at once all the gaiety of his tone and countenance.

"I am ſorry—" ſaid Fitz-Piers; but Conway ſtaid not to hear him, inſtantly departing to ſend a chaiſe for him and the lady.

Conway had proceeded ſome miles on his return to Strathenver, wrapped in meditations on the extraordinary concluſion of his purſuit of Carloville, of the intereſt he himſelf took in it, and of the effect it would have on Ethelreda, before Fitz-Piers and the ſtranger once entered his head. Notwithſtanding her homely attire and agitated countenance, he had perceived the traces of beauty—and in the tones

of her voice, and manner of expreſſing herſelf, ſomething of that captivating ſweetneſs he had often remarked in Ethelreda. "It certainly muſt be this likeneſs that has intereſted me ſo much for her," ſaid he in thought; and looking back for Fitz-Piers, he wiſhed for an inſtant to have aſked him if he had not diſcovered ſome reſemblance to the picture at St. Siffrid's: but the carriage was not in ſight.

CHAP. XXV.

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title-leaf,
Foretels the nature of a tragic volume:
So looks the ſtrand whereon the imperious flood
Hath left a witneſs'd uſurpation.

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was now the ſecond day ſince the funeral; and Harwood, impatient of any more delays, though he felt much compaſſion for the wretched family at Strathener, was reſolved nothing ſhould prevent him from returning to Mrs. Harwood with all expedition. In the remaining day he fully expected and moſt earneſtly wiſhed for ſome explanation of the fate of Sir Francis L'Eſterling; but not even his name, or any ſubject that could poſſibly lead to it, was ever mentioned by Lord Caerleon; and with equally ſcrupulous care he avoided

avoided ſpeaking of Lady Mariamne. Lady Caerleon gave them but little of her company, declaring all her time was taken up in attending Mrs. Conway, who was in reality the only one of her female relations ſhe had any reſpect for. It was with real ſatisfaction Harwood heard of ſome favourable ſymptoms in her diſorder, and that her phyſician thought it poſſible, if her ſtrength was not too much exhauſted by its violence, ſhe might recover. Though Caerleon had much affection for Mrs. Conway, Harwood, to his great ſurpriſe, could not perceive that he took any intereſt in this pleaſing intelligence; nor did his father's illneſs, though it occupied his time, ſeem to occupy his thoughts: in effect, his ſiſter's conduct, which added ſhame to his diſtreſſes, wounded him more deeply than any other calamity. To be "a dial for the ſlow-moving finger of ſcorn to point at," Caerleon, of all men, was leaſt able to endure; and frequently, as he thought of what he had ſtill to ſuffer, a ſkilful obſerver might have ſeen the paſt in the ſudden and ſtrongly marked tranſitions of his countenance.

Caerleon was ſitting in his father's room, apparently watching him, when Harwood came to tell him he was going. In the courſe of that day Lord Trecaſtle had appeared to know his ſon, and had attempted to ſpeak for the firſt time ſince his ſeizure. Caerleon ſtarted at the ſight of Harwood prepared to depart. "I am ſorry to leave you," ſaid the latter; "but you know how I am circumſtanced, and will allow the neceſſity."

"Mr. Harwood, I am ſorry for your departure," ſaid Caerleon ſolemnly; "and as

we may never meet again, I wiſh you and Mrs. Harwood all happineſs."

"We never *ſhall* meet again, if you have any objection, my Lord," ſaid Harwood.

"Put no unkind conſtruction on what I have ſaid; I cannot explain myſelf, continued Caerleon. "We part in friendſhip, do we not?"

"Certainly," cried Harwood. "I am ſure my conduct has implied nothing to the contrary."

"Do not then ſuffer my misfortunes to prejudice you againſt me hereafter."

"I can pardon you the caution," ſaid Harwood, "becauſe I know that misfortunes commonly have that effect; but I am proud to ſay, my conduct has never provoked it."

Caerleon was prevented from anſwering by the ſound of his father's voice, ſpeaking inarticulately. He approached his head nearer, to diſtinguiſh what he uttered. The dying man fixed his half-cloſed eyes upon his ſon. "Caerleon—your ſiſter Mariamne——" he breathed with a deep groan, and expired inſtantly.

Caerleon ſat motionleſs for ſome minutes, with his eyes fixed on the ground in deep meditation. Harwood, at a loſs what courſe to purſue, ſtood watching him intently, and was ſurpriſed to remark, that rage and not ſorrow had taken poſſeſſion of his features. At laſt, ſtarting up, he exclaimed, "If I could ſee her dead, I ſhould be happy!—but not here—in this houſe ſhe ſhall never come again—no, not her bones!" Then with his own hand cloſing the heavy eye-lids of the corſe. he drew the curtains, and taking Harwood by the arm, "Come with me," ſaid he, "to my uncle:

uncle: you have yet much to hear; and now I think I can tell it you."

Harwood, unable to recover from his aſtoniſhment at this ſcene, in which Caerleon's character appeared in ſo extraordinary a light, accompanied him in ſilence: but his wonder ceaſed when he heard at length what deeper cauſes of ſorrow had laid hold on his feelings; and he agreed with Caerleon, that a death like that they had witneſſed, independent of its cauſe, was not a ſubject of regret but of rejoicing; for what more terrible could be imagined than the ſufferings of Lord Trecaſtle, had he lived to hear the fate of his eldeſt daughter, and of the miſconduct of the other? Even Caerleon, forgetting all his former bright proſpects, envied the unconſcious repoſe of the departed. Mr. Conway heard of his brother's death with more emotion; though *his* affection for him had been little, and Caerleon's had been great. Misfortunes of the moſt ſerious kind had taken away the keenneſs of leſſer ſorrows from him, whilſt Mr. Conway's hard nature had only been rendered penetrable at all by their acuteneſs.

Harwood now found himſelf conſtrained to lengthen his ſtay unaſked; for he was the only perſon in this afflicted houſe ſufficiently collected to give the neceſſary orders upon ſuch occaſions: he therefore wrote to Mrs. Harwood, giving Lord Trecaſtle's death as the reaſon of his prolonged ſtay.

Though Conway had invited Fitz-Piers and the ſtranger to Frampton, ſuch was his impatience to reach St. Siffrid's, that he entreated them to proceed directly to Strathener-Caſtle, under pretence that the houſe at Frampton was empty. This was in reality the caſe; for though he

left ſome ſervants there with Dr. Felton, the various events at Strathener had cauſed moſt of them to remove there. Fitz-Piers was diſtreſſed at this new arrangement, which he had been drawn into, and reluctantly ſtopped at Strathener. Conway knew nothing of his mother's illneſs, and, writing a ſhort note as he ſat in his carriage, begged Fitz-Piers to give it, and ſhe would immediately wait on the lady who accompanied him. "Nothing," ſaid he, "but the moſt urgent affairs ſhould oblige me to leave you at this inſtant—in half an hour or leſs I will join you, and explain." Conway did not wait to aſk one ſingle queſtion about his family, but ordered his poſtillions to drive him to St. Siffrid's.

In the mean time, Fitz-Piers, who by no means liked his introduction at Strathener Caſtle, ſat in his chaiſe at the gate, deliberating whether he ſhould go into the houſe or not; very ill pleaſed with Conway for his inconſiderate behaviour, and half inclined to drive off in reſentment, but for the ſake of his companion, who did not ſpeak, but appeared ſinking with fatigue. On enquiring for Mrs. Conway, he found to his great ſurpriſe ſhe was confined to her bed by illneſs, and that Lord Caerleon had given orders to be denied to every one. Fitz-Piers immediately gueſſed on Lady Mariamne's account, and was about to depart, when he ſaw a gentleman coming towards the chaiſe. Mr. Harwood had ſeen both the carriages ſtop at the gate, and begged Dr. Felton to explain to the company why the family could not be ſeen; but to offer the uſual accommodations in the Caſtle.

"What

"What venerable looking figure is that coming towards us?—Look!—do you know that face?" cried Fitz-Piers.

"Ah! do I know it?" exclaimed the lady, ſpringing in ſuch haſte from the carriage that ſhe fell on the ground. The old gentleman haſtened to aſſiſt her, and with Fitz-Piers carried her into the hall, and, placing her on a chair, looked earneſtly at her and at Fitz-Piers by turns.

The lady turned away her face in tears from his ſcrutinizing eye, as if unable to ſupport its enquiry; then catching his hand, ſhe dropped on her knees, and exclaimed in a voice of anguiſh, "You diſown me!—your memory refuſes to acknowledge me—penitent as I am, and dearly as I have anſwered all my errors!"

The mild yet clouded countenance of the old man was covered with a faint colouring as he liſtened in doubt and uncertainty. "I remember *you well*, Mr. Fitz-Piers," ſaid he; "but can it be poſſible—is this—*this my Ellen?*—Is this the face that in my mind's eye I knew ſo well?—ſo perfect once!—Oh, my Ellen!" continued he, raiſing her in his arms, "did you feel no ſorrow, no compaſſion, that you left me ſeven long years, your fate involved in darkneſs? Oh, what a night of miſery! But I will not break a ſolemn promiſe—I have ſworn never to reproach you; but to receive you with gratitude and affection, as though you had not quitted me but to return."

"But I," ſaid Fitz-Piers, almoſt too much affected at his uncle's mildneſs to ſpeak, "I cannot ſo eaſily pardon her; not with reſpect to myſelf, for I thought her unworthy, and had forgotten her; but her ſilence towards you,

ſir, for ſeven years—you, whoſe very exiſtence ſeemed to hang upon her!"

"Do not raiſe up viſions of the paſt," cried Ellen: "my ſenſes float when I think of it!"

"Oh, never may the paſt diſturb one moment of the future!" ſaid the Doctor, wiping the tears from her eyes, at the ſame time that he aſſured her of his undiminiſhed affection. "But you are fatigued and feveriſh, my love." ſaid he: "I am deſired by Mr. Harwood to offer the accommodations of the Caſtle, nor could I be happy at having you further removed from me; I am afraid," continued he, putting his hand to his forehead, "I am certain I could not bear to loſe you again."

"We will never again be ſeparated, my dear uncle!" cried Ellen affectionately.

"I am ſorry," ſaid Fitz-Piers, "to mention any objection; but I believe, as Carloville's relations, we are here unwelcome as well as improper gueſts."

"I hear it rumoured in the houſe that he has offended ſome of this family," ſaid the Doctor ſighing.

"Oh, he has offended many—many!" exclaimed Ellen. "Do you, ſir, remember Carloville?"

"Do *I* remember Carloville?" repeated he, looking earneſtly at her.

"Name him not, Ellen," cried Fitz-Piers ſternly; "your beſt ornament is ſilence, now,"

"You, Euſtace, have learned to hate me for misfortunes, not for *crimes*, remember," ſaid Ellen with ſome remaining ſpirit in her eyes, that was ſoon quenched again in tears.

"This

"This harſhneſs, Euſtace, is quite out of ſeaſon," ſaid the Doctor: "you yourſelf might have expected reproof from one but little more diſpoſed to aſſume authority than I am."

"I readily allow it, ſir," ſaid Fitz-Piers; "but I cannot endure that name ſhould be mentioned in your hearing."

"Then be it ſo," cried the Doctor; "I will never aſk one queſtion: let this moment be the laſt of uneaſineſs, and you, my dear Ellen, ſhall be happy, and ſo will I."

"But ſtill," ſaid Fitz-Piers, returning to the ſubject they had quitted, "I cannot think of taking up my abode in this houſe, convinced as I am of its impropriety. I wiſh Conway had not been quite ſo inconſiderate; by offering to take us to Frampton, he has led me into this dilemma, and I have been abſurd enough to liſten to his wild propoſal."

"What Captain Conway?" repeated the Doctor in a tone of pleaſure and ſurpriſe. "You will be welcome to ſome of the family at leaſt, if you bring intelligence of him."

Haſten then to tell him of it, ſir. Ellen can remain here to-night, as your niece, if you think proper; and if ſhe has any wiſh to be introduced to the ladies——"

"Lady Caerleon is the only one here," ſaid the Doctor; and ſhe is too much engaged with attending Mrs. Conway, of whom I begin to hope favourably. If her life ſhould be ſpared a day longer, I make no doubt hearing of her ſon will contribute more towards her recovery than all my preſcriptions."

Fitz-Piers learnt from the Doctor many circumſtances of the Strathener family, of which Conway, as he had previouſly diſcovered, was ignorant. Lord Trecaſtle's death he thought

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an additional circumſtance in objection to his ſtaying, notwithſtanding a polite meſſage from Harwood, in the name of the family, to make the Caſtle as convenient to himſelf as poſſible; and after recommending his ſiſter not to be ſeen, he departed, having reluctantly determined to go to St. Siffrid's, feeling diſguſt rather than pleaſure at the idea of encountering any of thoſe diſſolute companions with whom he had idly waſted ſo many precious hours never to be recalled.

CHAP. XXVI.

Oſcura, profond' era, e nebuloſa
Tanto, che per ficcar lo viſo al ſondo
I' non vi diſcernea veruna coſa.

DANTE.

CONWAY reached St. Siffrid's juſt as the duſk of the evening began to caſt a grey tint over the ſhades of the landſcape, whilſt its light parts were ſtill glowing with the laſt deepened rays of the ſun. He watched it ſinking below the mountains that bounded the horizon; every wave glittered with the reflection; and even the large humid ſtones at the mouth of St. Siffrid's cavern reflected a trembling luſtre, like that of the waves themſelves. The autumnal hazineſs of the air made the orb appear unuſually

ally large. Conway fixed his eyes on its receding ſight, till the towers of the Caſtle, in deep ſhade, hid from him all the glories of the weſtern ſky.

His heat beat as he approached the gate:—all was ſilence—the lodges, the ſtables, the court of the Caſtle were deſerted! Not a human being was there to be ſeen, of whom he might aſk a ſingle queſtion. The change ſtruck him—he felt oppreſſed and uneaſy: "But what," thought he, "is this reverſe to Ethelreda?—In her priſon this ſolitude has never ceaſed to reign." He walked towards the well-remembered door on the ſouth ſide. It was, as uſual, unfaſtened within: he moved on, without any impediment, till he reached the library. All this part of the houſe, in duſt and almoſt in ruin, made Conway ſigh as he paſſed through it; and he fancied the ſight of this faded grandeur had occaſioned the depreſſion of ſpirits he now felt—ſo unlike the joyful expectations he had lately formed of ſeeing Ethelreda, and of never being ſeparated from her. It was ſome time before Conway could find the aperture in the wall, ſo exactly was it concealed by the pattern of the tapeſtry; and he was almoſt tempted to believe that fancy had deceived him, and that his laſt interview with Ethelreda was a phantom of his imagination. At laſt he diſcovered the ſecret way, and, rapidly deſcending the ſtairs, proceeded, as he had formerly done, through the ſubterraneous paſſages to the tower.

As he approached the ſteps, impatient to ſpeak, he called aloud, "Ethelreda, it is Conway!" and inſtantly he heard "Conway! Conway!" repeated, till the name died into indiſtinct murmurs, and ſeemed to mix with the hollow

hollow blaſts that ſwept through theſe dreary avenues, accompanied with the ſad and loſty ſwell of the harp of Eolus. "She hears me! It is the ſoft voice of Ethelreda!" exclaimed Conway in tranſport, and ſcarcely did he touch the ſteps as he ſprung towards the door. It was not ſhut, as he imagined, for all was darkneſs: here no ſun ever entered, nor did a ſingle gleam mark the only window of the dungeon.—"Ethelreda, it is Conway!" But no cheering ſound repeated his name: all was ſilence and darkneſs. "Speak to me, in pity!" cried Conway, unable to bear the ſenſations that agitated him: "Speak to me, call me! call me Conway!" and again as diſtinctly he heard his own name. Willing to be deceived, he eagerly followed the ſound; and traverſing the vault with hurried footſteps, once more he had reached the library without diſcovering the object of his ſearch. He ſtood ſome moments deeply conſidering, to account for Ethelreda's abſence from her dungeon. At laſt, "She flies from me!" he exclaimed: "that marriage—that laſt fatal marriage, has cauſed her to ſhun me! She will conceal herſelf, and I ſhall never ſee her more! But Llewellyn muſt have aſſiſted her in eſcaping, and he ſhall diſcover to me where he has placed her."

Conway was not ſlow in ſeeking Llewellyn: he went inſtantly to that part of the Caſtle inhabited by the ſervants. In the great hall ſtill remained the relics of the laſt entertainment of Carloville's aſſociates—ſcattered cards, dice, and tables of games of chance. Conway glanced his eye around him in diſguſt, and inſtantly recalled to his memory the offending creature who ſo lately had ſat amongſt thoſe whom he called his friends, and encouraged every

every act of depredation. The noiſe of riot had ceaſed, nor had a ſingle human creature croſſed his way as he traverſed the ſeveral corridors and apartments.

In the kitchen were ſitting two or three ill-looking women ſervants, who ſeemed to be without employment: the men, having no maſter, had diſpoſed of themſelves according to their ſeveral inclinations. The women roſe at the appearance of a gentleman. "Where," ſaid Conway, "is the old ſervant of the Caſtle, Morgan Llewellyn?"

They looked at each other, as in ignorance of his name. "Does the gentleman mean," ſaid one to the other, "the old grey-headed man, in a very patched coat, that always uſed to light the cook's fires?"

"I mean a venerable-looking old man, with white hair, who lived here in the lifetime of Sir Roger L'Eſterling," ſaid Conway.

"Yes, ſir; and ſo I've heard. He uſed to live in the tower called the Knight's Tower, on the ſouth-eaſt ſide of the Caſtle."

"He *uſed* to live!" exclaimed Conway: "What, is he dead?"

"I don't know, ſir, that he is: but I can't ſay I have ſeen him lately; and I ſhould not be over fond of going to look for him, I muſt be ſo bold as to ſay; for every body knows the ſouth wing is as troubled as any thing in the world: and you know, ſir, the tower at the ſouth-eaſt angle is cloſe on to the ſouth wing; indeed it is in the ſame corner as one may ſay, in a manner."

"Can any one ſhow me the way to the Knight's Tower?" ſaid Conway, who had not liſtened to the woman's jargon.

"Me! Dear me! No, ſir! I never was there! I wiſh the cook was at home! He's afraid

afraid of nothing, for all he's a Frenchman! But he won't be home to-night, I'm ſure; for he went out with my Lord's man, and the major domo, as I call him. He, *to be ſure!* muſt ride my Lord's own horſe Diomed, becauſe he was going to *Bel-vedery* houſe, to aſk if Sir Francis's people had any news of my Lord! Indeed, now I think of it, you may know all about my Lord, and when he comes home."

Conway, finding it impoſſible to interrupt the volubility of the woman to whom he had unfortunately applied for information, deſired another to deſcribe to him the way to the Knight's Tower; but the firſt, ſtill chooſing to lead the diſcourſe, ſaid, "Well, ſir, if you will go, I can direct you myſelf; for I know the way by hearſay, as well as another. You muſt go through the long paſſage, and then you muſt puſh up the ſliding door, that's cloſe by the little door, that's cloſe by the buttery-hatch—and an empty buttery I'm ſure it is—and then you muſt go up the ſtairs till you come to the firſt window with three bars; and then you muſt take care you don't turn to the right through the little ſtone door-way; for, Lord help us! there's no door, and I verily believe there's no bottom to that place, it looks ſo deep and ſo dark! I juſt ventured to look once down with Brêtonne—"

"Well," ſaid Conway.

"Well, ſir, there is a little room oppoſite with a kind of an old yellow bed. I would not have you go in there, but go ſtraight forward up the round about ſtairs, and you will come to the old man's room at the top of the Knight's Tower. But, ſir, ſtop! I wiſh you would not go; for once, when one of the men faſtened the ſliding-door to plague the old man, we did not

ſee

ſee him for a week, and thought to be ſure he was ſtarved. But I, happening to be up early, ſaw him walking acroſs the court as compoſed as an old wizard: I thought I ſhould have *ſwounded!*"

More than half this harangue was loſt upon Conway; and the woman, finding him determined, once more entreated him to ſtay while ſhe provided him with a light. At the ſliding-door Conway got rid of his informer, whoſe tedious prating ſoon had ſo long detained him from his ſearch.

Conway ſoon perceived how neceſſary the lantern was to his ſafety in this dilapidated dwelling. The ſtairs were narrow, and frequently looſened from their joints, and moſt of the lower ſteps were ſo filled with the rubbiſh that conſtantly fell from the walls, as to be almoſt a continued ſlope. Conway wondered as he aſcended how a feeble old man could climb this, even to him, almoſt inacceſſible tower, and began to fancy he had been liſtening to lies. Then again it occured to him that Llewellyn himſelf might have left the Caſtle with his miſtreſs, where it appeared he had not received very kind treatment. He felt apprehenſions ſcarcely to be endured, but ſtill he proceeded, though almoſt without hope. At laſt he ſaw on his left the window with three bars, and, not many ſteps above it, the room with the bed, and nearly oppoſite on the right, the ſtone doorway.

Conway ſtood an inſtant looking into the room, and immediately perceived, from the decayed ſtate of the flooring, why he had been cautioned againſt entering it. All at once he fancied he ſaw a motion in the curtains; and imagining Llewellyn might have changed his abode

abode, he ſtepped lightly forward, and, drawing one of them aſide, ſaw nothing: even the bed was removed, and the once ſplendid canopy ſeemed, like the ſword of Democles, ready to fall upon his head!

"What a ſtrange habitation is this!" ſaid Conway. He liſtened for a moment, fancying he heard footſteps, and leaving the empty chamber, looked into the oppoſite one ſtill more dreary. The flooring, as well as he could ſee, ſeemed to be gone entirely, and nothing but impenetrable darkneſs preſented itſelf. "Ha! I ſee a light like a ſtar!" exclaimed he. Preſently he found he had deceived himſelf; for, though he watched for it, he ſaw it no more, and proceeded up the winding ſtair-caſe, the upper part of which ſeemed to have been cleared of the rubbiſh, and was tolerably paſſable. At laſt he entered the chamber of the Knight's Tower by a trap which was open. This too was ſilent and empty, but Conway perceived by its furniture it had once been inhabited: many of the holes in the flooring had been coarſely mended; the deficiency of glaſs had been ſupplied by paper, and a few aſhes of a wood fire ſtill remained on the hearth. Whether it had been recently extinguiſhed Conway could not diſcover, for no warmth remained; and the fire might have been lighted in the morning, or in the laſt century.

Deſponding and careleſs of his own ſafety, Conway once more gave himſelf up to that violent and paſſionate emotion forming ſo deep a ſhade in his character. Unheeded, he ſaw the waning light of his candle whilſt he raved againſt Ethelreda, himſelf, and the whole world; then furiouſly deſcending the ſtairs, his dying light ſcarcely ſerved to ſhow him he was

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on the brink of the dangerous apartment. Again he fancied he ſaw the ſtar, and hollaed into the gulph with a frantic and terrifying voice. As he leaned forward, reſting againſt the narrow door-way, he perceived a rope, or rather cable, faſtened to an immenſe iron ſtaple. "There is a way then!" he exclaimed; and daſhing his lantern on the ſteps, he inſtantly ſeized it, and plunged into the cavern towards the fancied light. It was not courage; for no courage could have carried a man through ſuch an undertaking, deliberately, alone, and not a human creature appriſed of his deſign, or informed if it were practicable: it was the phrenſy of diſappointment; for Conway's too violent temper, exerciſed as it had been, was ſtill too impetuous to bear a misfortune when he had looked forward to nothing but happineſs.

CHAP. XXVII.

Noi ſoli a noi ſteſſi
Fabri ſiam pur delle miſerie noſtre.

GUARINI.

SOON after the departure of Fitz-Piers, Dr. Felton found an opportunity of acquainting Mr. Conway with his ſon's arrival. Surpriſe, which he had long learnt to command, did not betray to the Doctor that his return was unexpected, and even unhoped; ſo ſtrongly was he prepoſſeſſed

prepoſſeſſed ſomething unfortunate had befallen him: and even his *joy* was moderated at hearing Lady Octavia did not return with him. He wiſhed much to ſee him, and frequently queſtioned the Doctor, whether he knew what road he had taken, and when he would return? In the courſe of the converſation between Dr. Felton and Fitz-Piers, the latter had ſaid he was gone either to the Caſtle, or Caſino Belvedere, as he had taken that road: but having promiſed ſo ſpeedily to return, he gueſſed it was to the Caſtle.

Theſe circumſtances Dr. Felton recollected, and repeated to Mr. Conway, in order to ſatisfy him that his ſon's abſence could not be much prolonged. Lord Caerleon too had heard of Conway's arrival, and anxiouſly wiſhed to know the reſult of his journey. Nor was Harwood leſs concerned in every thing that intereſted Conway, whom he had long ardently wiſhed to ſee, and whom he had regarded with more than common affection. Harwood particularly deſired to hear him explain his motives for marrying Octavia—a ſtep for which he could aſſign none that ſeemed reaſonable or ſatisfactory. But it grew late, and each by turns betrayed ſigns of impatience and wonder, whilſt each aſſiduouſly tried to account to the other for his continued abſence. Lord Caerleon and Mr. Harwood, both too deeply engaged with ſeparate concerns to talk long on indifferent ſubjects, ſpoke of Conway, and were ſilent by turns; nor did they perceive, for ſome time, that Mr. Conway had quitted them.

The ſtate of Mr. Conway's mind, owing to the ſituation of his family, notwithſtanding he had given up his whole life to the practice of

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hard and unfeeling policy, may be more eaſily gueſſed at than deſcribed; a ſtrong proof that, however people may become dead to the miſeries of others, they are always alive to their own. His brother fallen a ſacrifice to the miſconduct of his eldeſt daughter, the ſecond, for ought he knew to the contrary, equally a diſgrace to her family, and Mrs. Conway ſtill wavering on the brink of eternity, gave him ſome faint idea of all that his ſon had ſuffered: he grew ſtill more anxious to ſee him, and at laſt loſing all patience, himſelf ſet out for the Caſtle, late as it was, on foot and unaccompanied.

Fitz-Piers did not arrive there till ſome time after Conway. It was dark; and, fatigued as he was, he forgot to enquire for his fellow traveller. The ſervants, who knew him well, conducted him to the room he had been accuſtomed to occupy, on the weſt ſide of the Caſtle where he fell into a repoſe no trifling noiſe could have interrupted.

Mr. Conway's heart was too earneſtly fixed on ſeeing his ſon, to ſuffer the darkneſs of the night to be any impediment; nor did he wiſh it to be known at Strathener he had left the Caſtle, ſince in Wales all cuſtoms that relate to the dead are moſt ſcrupulouſly adhered to. The time was nearly equal between ten o'clock and eleven when he reached St. Siffrid's. He blew loudly at the gate; and the noiſe of the dogs, rouſed at the blaſts of the horn, alarmed a ſtable-boy, who lay ſleeping in the great kitchen. It was ſtill ſome time before Mr. Conway could gain admittance. At laſt the boy, with the ſame woman who had talked to Conway, having eyed him through a crevice, ventured to unbar the poſtern. Mr. Conway entered

tered with his uſual air of majeſty. "Where," ſaid he, "is the gentleman who arrived here this evening?——" Pray, ſir, let me light you into one of the drawing-rooms," ſaid the woman ſubmiſſively; at the ſame time croſſing the court with the light. Mr. Conway was conſtrained to follow her, then repeating the queſtion—"Why, ſir, which of the gentlemen do you mean?"

"I mean Captain Conway,"

"Why, ſir, Mr. Fitz-Piers is gone to bed long ago."

"I do not aſk for Mr. Fitz-Piers," ſternly anſwered Mr. Conway: "Was there not another gentleman?"

"Oh dear, yes!—As ſure as I am here, you muſt mean the gentleman that came in the evening to look for the old wizard like, that lives in the Knight's Tower?"

"I don't underſtand you,"

"Why, ſir—a young gentleman—now I think of it, he may have been a wizard too—yet he did not look much like one, neither!—As handſome a young gentleman as ever I ſet my eyes on—To be ſure, he can't have killed himſelf?"

"Where is the Knight's Tower?" vehemently aſked Mr. Conway—"Lead the way."

"I!—I lead the way?—No, not if you ſhould cut me in ten pieces!—I go to the Knight's Tower? I don't know the way—I wiſh the devil had the Knight's Tower, and the old wizard, and all that belongs to it. For my part, I believe the people are all mad about the Knight's Tower. I ſuppoſe, if I wanted to kill myſelf, I could find ways enough without going there, forſooth!"

"Woman!

"Woman! tell me inſtantly what you mean:" cried Mr. Conway in a voice of authority: then, ſnatching up the candle, he made to the door that led to the ſouth apartments.

"You muſt go by yourſelf, ſir! you muſt go by yourſelf!" exclaimed the woman, retreating as faſt as he was able; whilſt Mr. Conway perſevered in his intention of ſeeking the Tower, where, from the woman's innuendo, which he applied to his ſon, he gueſſed ſomething terrible had happened.

The ſtillneſs and deſolate aſpect of theſe forſaken rooms rather increaſed Mr. Conway's forebodings of evil. He felt an unuſual numbneſs and weight in his limbs; and ſcarcely could he drag one foot after the other till he reached the ſtate-room. Beyond him, he thought he heard doors opened and ſhut; and liſtened at that of the long gallery, he fancied he heard ponderous footſteps, as of perſons ſlowly eſcaping. He tried in vain to open the door: it was ſtrongly faſtened; and, almoſt exhauſted with emotion, he ſat down, ſtill holding his candle, to reſt for a moment. Round the room hung many fragments of crimſon velvet, flutterring as the ſouth wind ſwept through the creaking caſements. Fixing his eyes on the ſide oppoſite to him, he obſerved the hangings agitated: they parted at a ſeam, and he ſaw a figure ſtand before him! It ſeemed covered with white and black alternately; he knew not which, for his ſight ſwam in miſts as he gazed at it. The veil moved up: I remember you! I pity you!" ſaid a voice: "You have ſeen him for the laſt time—he is duſt. Follow me, I ſhall be aſhes! Nothing!"—The hanging fell ſilently to the floor, and diſcovered

covered a ſmall door through which the viſion glided. Mr. Conway had no power to refrain from following. It led him to the library: then all at once it ſunk away, and nothing remained but a heap of black that looked like the covering of a coffin.

It was with extreme difficulty Mr. Conway reached the drawing-room again. A momentary ſuſpenſion of his faculties made him forget for an inſtant the appalling ſounds he had heard uttered, by a form not the leſs terrifying becauſe it was remembered. "To ſevere vengeance!" cried he in a voice of agony: "Let me fly from this dwelling of horrors!"—All was repoſe and ſilence in the Caſtle. He unbarred the poſtern; and, leaving it open, tried with all his remaining ſtrength to aſcend the ſteep ſide of the park, in order to return the neareſt way to Strathener; where Lord Caerleon and Mr. Harwood, in ſilent amazement, waited more than half the night the return of him and his ſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Eterni numi, o come ſon diverſi
Quegli alti inacceſſibili ſentieri!
Onde ſcendono a noi le voſtre grazie,
Da qui fallaci e torto
Onde a noſtri penſier ſalgono al cielo.

GUARINI.

IMMURED in the Knight's Tower with Winifred, Llewellyn heard not the knell of Sir Francis's funeral; for, though old, no evil conſcience diſturbed his repoſe, or prevented him from ſleeping, after the fatiguing ſervice he paid his miſtreſs. He had left her on that evening as well as uſually ſhe appeared to be, after having, with Winifred, brought her proviſions for the enſuing day; nor did he ever repeat his attendance till night returned.

It was on the following evening that, having kindled a light, he deſcended, with Winifred, the ſteps of his habitation, towards a ſecret way leading to the ſubterraneous avenues under the ſouth ſide of the Caſtle. Arrived at Ethelreda's apartment, he was not much ſurpriſed at finding it empty, knowing her cuſtom of walking theſe paſſages, where night always reigned, at that late hour, as more ſecure. Having poured freſh oil into her lamp, and trimmed and lighted it by his own, Llewellyn depoſited a little veſſel of milk, and ſome bread, on the table. Winifred threw ſome pieces of charcoal on a chafing-diſh (for, in this dreary abode, all was cold, damp, and cheerleſs), and, leaving a little baſket of linen, returned

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with Llewellyn towards their own ſcarcely more cheerful dwelling. Though theſe faithful old ſervants met with frequent ſcoffs and inſults from thoſe of the Caſtle, yet in a houſehold ſo badly regulated they found no difficulty in ſupplying themſelves and their miſtreſs with neceſſaries; and ſometimes, in reward for little ſervices Llewellyn was able to render any of them, he returned to the Knight's Tower plentifully ſupplied with ſuch plain proviſions as he knew ſuited the ſimple taſte of Ethelreda, ſo that, thus circumſtanced, he neither, feared for her exiſtence nor his own.

Having at length reached the baſe of ſome ſteps leading directly to the Tower, a way unknown even to Ethelreda, and which he had diſcovered in traverſing the vaulted paſſages; having taken hold of the rope which was faſtened to a poſt to ſerve as a baluſtrade, he heard all at once a moſt tremendous and terrifying ſound, that echoed through the cavern like the voice of a giant; and he felt the rope ſnatched from his hand, and agitated ſo violently, that he nearly fell backward with the ſhock. Winifred, ſtruck with extreme fear, retreated into one of the numerous receſſes formed in the walls of the vault. Llewellyn, with more than uſual preſence of mind, blew out his lamp, and followed her. For ſome minutes breathleſs with their fears, they could not even liſten: more than half the night they ſpent in the moſt anxious and terrifying ſtate of ſuſpenſe and dread for the ſafety of Ethelreda; nor could they venture to climb the dangerous ſtair-caſe to regain their own habitation. But a dreary and uninterrupted ſilence had ſucceeded to this noiſe. "Winny," ſaid Llewellyn, at laſt taking courage to ſpeak, "that noiſe was a token

a token of death, and the warning came to me!"——Winifred began to weep bitterly. "We will go back, and relight our lamp," continued Llewellyn: "I muſt take leave of my dear miſtreſs, and to-morrow I may not be able. I feel my arm quite numbed, and all my right ſide beginning to grow dead. Lend me your arm, Winny, and don't cry:—it may be your turn next."

"Ah! I'm ſure it will," cried Winny; and ſhe continued to cry and ſob till they reached the Watch-Tower.

The lamp was ſtill burning, and every thing remained as they had placed it, Ethelreda was not returned, nor did any thing ſeem to indicate that ſhe had been there. "Oh, my dear lady is loſt! Where ſhall I ſeek for her?" exclaimed Winifred.—"That is impoſſible," ſaid Llewellyn confidently: "She is certainly in the empty apartments, or on the roof of the Caſtle, where ſhe ſo often walks at night."—And forgetting the deathſtroke the ſuperſtitious old man fancied he had juſt received, he once more, with rather increaſed alacrity aſcended to the library; but neither there nor in the other rooms did he find Ethelreda. All his ſad fancies returned with added force; and really incapacitated from fatigue for continuing the ſearch, he opened the door of the long gallery, which communicated with the chamber on the ſteps of the Knight's Tower, and ſhortly regained his own dwelling.

Conway ſoon diſcovered, that though he had leaped, like Curtius, into the gulph, he was in no danger of periſhing from his daring undertaking. He graſped the cable firmly, which he perceived, inſtead of hanging perpendicularly from the ſtaple, was continued in

an oblique direction; ſo that he deſcended with moderate velocity a great depth, till he was ſtopped by ſtriking his feet againſt the bottom. As ſoon as he had recovered from the ſhock and giddineſs it occaſioned, he recollected the ſtar-like ſpeck of light that had tempted him to ſo deſperate an adventure—But it was gone—and had vaniſhed he knew not how. He was not ſlow in diſcovering that this paſſage communicated with thoſe he had already explored, and that it equally led to the abode of Ethelreda: "it was perhaps her lamp that he had ſeen, and he had terrified her with his violence," The caution with which he was compelled to advance, but ill ſuited the impatience which he felt to overtake the lamp. Obſcurity more impenetrable than the blackeſt night, thickened by moiſt vapours that ſmelt unwholeſome, added to the ruggedneſs of his path, which ſeemed to have been hewn through rocks, ſo much impeded his progreſs, that he began to fancy day muſt have broken upon the world above whilſt he wandered in theſe confines of eternal darkneſs. Frequently he loſt himſelf in hollows of the cavern; from which he with difficulty could return to the path again: and ſometimes, as he ſtood ſtill to breathe, he ſeemed to hear ſounds over his head, like the waves breaking on the pebbly ſhores below the Caſtle. What was his joy, when a long pale ſtream of light ſhewed him the humid ſides of the cavern covered with white petrifactions from the damps, and the ſteps, each touched with the ray as it ſpread itſelf through the miſty vapours!

But where was Ethelreda? She muſt have been there; for the lamp, though almoſt expiring had been lighted in his abſence. Was it

Ethelreda's

Ethelreda's lamp that had invited him into the vault? Or had he been deluded by one of thoſe miſts that riſe out of moiſt and fenny places, and lead the devoted traveller aſtray and into danger, till, its fictitious fires exhauſted, it ſinks again into vapour? "At leaſt," ſaid he, replenifhing the lamp with oil provided for the purpoſe, "this will aſſiſt my ſearch." Conway recollected how ſtrangely Ethelreda had appeared to him in the church. He knew theſe avenues were contrived to fly to the ſanctuary in times of danger; but ſo intricate were they in their turnings, and ſo admirably conſtructed to bewilder, that, though ſearching for it, he miſſed the aperture, and continued his way till he aſcended the ſteps to the library —as unconſcious where he was, as if he had traverſed them for the firſt time in his life. He lifted up the arras—a heap of ſomething lay before him: he ſet down his lamp, in order to remove it out of his way. He graſped it in both hands; it was heavy—the black covering fell aſide; it was a human figure—it was Ethelreda! pale, cold, lifeleſs.

Conway ſtaggered, and could ſcarcely ſupport himſelf. In diſtraction he touched her lips to try if ſhe breathed: he held his hand to her heart, to feel if it beat. In this deſolate place none could hear him call for aſſiſtance. In diſtreſs almoſt inſupportable, he carried her through the rooms till he reached the Caſtle-court, not knowing where to find help; for no ſound that he had power to make, had rouſed the few inhabitants of the Caſtle: even the dogs confined in the out-building were too remote to alarm the family, though their diſtant barkings evinced their watchfulneſs.

The moon ſhone like a thin edge, and her inclined horns told that night was more than at odds with morning. The blue gleam that fell upon the poſtern gate ſerved to diſcover that it was open. Conway paſſed it, and made towards Strathener, carrying Ethelreda ſtill wrapped in the diſmal trappings of the grave.

At Strathener, the preparations for the obſequies of Lord Trecaſtle were altogether as ſplendid as thoſe of Sir Francis L'Eſterling had been private and unadorned; and Harwood, who could ſcarcely conceal his ſurpriſe whilſt the circumſtances of Sir Francis's death were unknown to him, thought them a ſufficient apology for the very unuſual manner in which the Strathener family had proceeded with reſpect to his interment. On the evening preceding the one on which the funeral was to take place, the body, in an open coffin of red velvet richly adorned with ſilver, was placed in the great hall opening to the park: a vaſt crowd of attendants in funeral habits ſurrounded the bier, diſtributing ſpiced wines to all who choſe to come and look upon the deceaſed; nor did any refrain from paying this laſt mark of reverence to the good Earl, whoſe hoſpitable and profuſe ſtyle of living had diffuſed plenty for many miles round his Caſtle, and whoſe death they lamented with unfeigned ſorrow.

In a room opening from the hall, but retired from obſervers, ſat Lord Caerleon and Mr. Harwood; their ſilence only interrupted by the whiſpered lamentations of thoſe who ſurrounded the body, and now and then a conjecture on the prolonged abſence of Mr. Conway and his ſon. But the night was far ſpent; and by degrees the ſound of voices ſunk into low murmurs,

murs, till every breath was loſt in the awful ſtillneſs of night. Trouble and fatigue, joined to this ſtillneſs ſo favourable to ſleep, had thrown Caerleon into a ſlumber as he ſat in his chair. Harwood's thoughts were too buſily employed to allow him the like indulgence. He wiſhed to ſleep; but felt no inclination to cloſe his eyes, or even to repoſe his limbs, ſo reſtleſs had the contemplation of theſe ſtrange and unexpected events made him. Amongſt them, not the leaſt diſtreſſing was the death of the unfortunate Sir Francis L'Eſterling; and that the vaſt accumulation of property, neither wanted nor wiſhed for by him, came too late to conſole and ſet at reſt the wounded and independent ſpirit of Ethelreda.

The light of the dawn began to glimmer in the eaſt as through a thin veil: the ſtars neareſt the horizon grew dim and diſappeared, as the pale duſky light deepened into yellow, and tinged the gray vapour, as it rolled away, with long unbroken ſtreaks of ſaffron colour: even the ſtars in the higher firmament began to loſe their luſtre, though the landſcape beneath was ſtill in deep ſhade. Harwood's contemplations and Caerleon's ſlumbers were both broken by a low knocking at the hall. "It is the hour of the funeral," cried Caerleon, ſtarting haſtily from his chair. "I will go myſelf to the gate," ſaid Harwood, moving towards the hall: but the door was already opened by a mute, who retired as Mr. Conway entered.

He ſtarted back, with an irreſolute and uncertain countenance, at ſight of the gloomy objects around him; the black drapery almoſt abſorbing the light of the tapers that burnt round the bier, except where the bright po-

liſhed ornaments threw back the ray in ſtrong contraſt. Mr. Conway fixed his eyes for a few moments on the inanimate object before him; then, folding his arms, he began to pace the hall, ſometimes with a quick, and ſometimes with a ſlow and irregular ſtep. Frequently he turned towards the door, caſting up his eyes to the light with an expreſſion of deſpairing agony that ſurpriſed Harwood, who unobſerved ſtood ſilently watching him for a few moments, wiſhing to advance, yet wanting reſolution to ſpeak to a man who appeared to be inſenſible to every thing but the preſſure of his miſeries. At laſt, approaching him, "Have you taken no reſt to-night, Sir?" ſaid Harwood; "and do you not mean to take ſome?"

"Mr. Harwood?—No!—Yes!"—Mr. Conway looked at him ſteadily, and continued his walking; then ſtopping ſuddenly, and pointing to the corpſe—"Should you," ſaid he, "if you were to ſee that perſon at any future time—I mean Lord Trecaſtle, or any other perſon—ſhould you ſuppoſe that you had really ſeen him, or that it was only an illuſion of your fancy—that your ſenſes were diſturbed? I inſtance one perſon; but you know, if it be another, that does not alter the queſtion; it is exactly the ſame."

"Exactly!" ſaid Harwood, looking at him with aſtoniſhment.

"But anſwer me, give me your opinion," ſaid Mr. Conway, with all the calmneſs of a man ſpeaking on an indifferent ſubject.

"I ſcarcely know how to anſwer you, or even to give you my opinion," ſaid Harwood, viewing him with undiſguiſed wonder; for that a man who but the moment before had appeared

peared to be ſo abſorbed in ſorrow as ſcarcely to be conſcious of the exiſtence of any other being, could enter into ſuch a diſcuſſion, could not fail to excite his ſurpriſe. "There are ſo many circumſtances to be conſidered, that I think it almoſt impoſſible to ſpeak decidedly. The time, the place, the diſpoſitions of the perſons towards each other, all would have ſtrong influence, I ſhould imagine, either in confirming one in the belief of a preternatural appearance, or in the more reaſonable ſuppoſition that the imagination is diſturbed and wrought upon by fever and melancholy."

"Then you would conclude—" ſaid Mr. Conway, heſitatingly, as if inviting Mr. Harwood to proceed.

"I myſelf know not what I ſhould conclude under ſimilar circumſtances. I look upon a man *himſelf* to be utterly incompetent to decide—Yet I am no ſceptic in theſe matters—If *you*, for inſtance, were to tell me you had witneſſed any ſtrange appearance——"

"Ha!"—

"And I was pre-informed it was one whom you loved and regretted, and wiſhed to follow, I ſhould conclude, and I think reaſonably, that inceſſant thinking on your favourite ſubject had diſturbed your intellects. On the other hand, if it were one whom you had injured, your conſcience might be ſuppoſed equally active. In either caſe, ſince no man can decide for himſelf, and will not ſuffer *another* to decide for him—in ſhort, ſince there is no conviction in arguments brought as evidence againſt the ſenſes, what does it ſignify whether thoſe appearances we call *ghoſts* or ſpirits are of "that bodily creation fancy is very cunning in," or that ſhadows have really

appeared to the eye, unaſſiſted by the imagination?"

"Conſcience!" exclaimed Mr. Conway, putting his hand to his head, as if he had found the word.

"I confeſs," ſaid Harwood, not obſerving him, "for my own part, if I ſhould ever ſee, or fancy I ſaw, it matters not which, in my opinion, the reſemblance of one in whom I was much intereſted, and whom I knew to be dead—Sir Roger L'Eſterling, for example, or any of his family——" Mr. Conway uttered an exclamation and a groan, that ſtartled and interrupted Harwood, and made him face him precipitately. He was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at his again ſo ſtrangely altered countenance, and, thinking him ſeized with ſudden illneſs, moved towards him to offer his ſupport. Mr. Conway abruptly ſeized his hand, and, pointing it towards the door, "Look! look! there!" cried he, "directly to the portal!—Do you ſee?—It comes nearer—nearer!"

"I do ſee," ſaid Harwood, in a ſteady though low tone; "but may I truſt my ſight?—What do *you* ſee?"

Mr. Conway made no anſwer, but tried to ſupport himſelf by leaning on Harwood, preventing him from advancing. The object that had arreſted their attention, and raiſed their wonder to a painful height, approached no further than the porch. The dim light of the morning, mixed with the gloomy rays of the tapers, ſhining in contrary directions on this extraordinary appearance, inſtead of ſhewing them more clearly the object, formed a contraſt of lights and colouring, that deepened the intermediate ſhades ſo that no eye could penetrate it, or preſerve connection in the form on which they

they gazed ſo intently. It ſeemed inanimate, and in a leaning attitude, yet perfectly detached from ſupport; but ſo light as to appear fluttering in the breeze, or with the quicker and more uncertain motion of objects ſeen through ſmoke. "Come nearer!" cried Harwood, unable to command himſelf; and inſtantly advanced, whilſt Mr. Conway ſtood fixed to the ground. The pale countenance, the cloſed eye, the languid and apparently inanimate form, he immediately recognized. "Ethelreda!" uttered Harwood, in a tone difficult to deſcribe; and he would have taken her in his arms but for Conway, who, now throwing aſide the black and white fluttering folds that concealed him behind her, diſcovered himſelf to his father and to Harwood, who ſtarted with amazement, and retreated a ſtep, as Conway with a ſtaggering pace advanced further into the hall, to where Mr. Conway ſtood immoveable.

He ſtopped and was ſilent, ſeeming to breathe with difficulty. "If ſhe had injured you," cried he, "if ſhe had deſerved this cruel perſecution, ſhe could have made no other atonement!" Look on this countenance —this form! The ſpirit ſhall animate it again! I ſhall ſee her riſe an angel, when you ſhall ſee me what ſhe is now." His face had undergone many variations, and his articulation became indiſtinct, as he ceaſed to ſpeak. His countenance was fixed, his eyes cloſed; and releaſing his hold, Harwood ſprung forward and caught Ethelreda, whilſt Conway fell with extraordinary weight on the pavement.

Mr. Conway, to whom in the confuſed ſtate of his mind all this terrifying ſcene appeared like a wild and unconnected dream, rouſed

from

from his torpor by the falling of his ſon's body, uttered an exclamation of horror, and, calling aloud for help, threw himſelf by his ſide, and lamented him with the moſt piercing expreſſions of grief, of repentance, and ſelf-accuſation.

Caerleon was not ſo far removed from the hall, but the ſounds of diſtreſs reached his ear; and haſtening towards the ſcene of it, what was his ſurpriſe at the ſight of Ethelreda, of Conway! at the ſtupefied grief of Harwood, and the frantic exclamations of his uncle, full of remorſe and ſelf-reproach!

"Oh for a glaſs—a feather! to try if ſhe breathe!" cried Caerleon, throwing himſelf on his knees by Ethelreda.—"Can nothing ſave her? I will fly to Dr. Felton!" ſtarting on his feet.

"Is he the phyſician of the dead? aſked Mr. Conway, with frightful ſternneſs. "Look here!—Here had I raiſed my pillar of happineſs—and ſee, it is mouldered to nothing!"

Lord Caerleon, without attending to him, haſtened in ſearch of the aſſiſtance he expected from Dr. Felton. The old phyſician, who had left his patient Mrs. Conway in a ſtate from which he hoped amendment, was retired to bed; but, for many hours too much occupied with his happineſs in having recovered his long-loſt Ellen, had ſcarcely begun to ſleep, when a voice at his door diſturbed him, and obliged him to riſe. Caerleon, without anſwering his queſtions, hurried him to the hall where he had left Ethelreda, whoſe head Harwood was ſupporting in the ſame hopeleſs ſilence.

The Doctor looked intently on her countenance with the ſtrongeſt marks of pity and aſtoniſhment,

aſtoniſhment, and then at Conway—"It was decreed that theſe two ſhould meet at laſt!" ſaid he; "but whether in this world——"

"What do you ſay?" aſked Mr. Conway, impatiently. "If you can reſtore them, do not talk, but act. If I could reward you with a dukedom—a kingdom—I ſhould think it nothing!"

"And ſo, believe me, ſhould I!—I have been uſed to conſider them as no value—" ſaid the Doctor, applying ſtrong eſſences to Conway's temples, who ſlowly ſeemed to be recovering from his fainting. "This is indeed a reward!" exclaimed he, as he perceived ſome weak remaining pulſe in Ethelreda's arm—"You know not how ſtrongly I am intereſted in theſe two perſons—and if I ſucceed in reſtoring them, I aſk no greater recompenſe."

"Are there then any remains of life?" exclaimed Harwood, ſpeaking for the firſt time.

"Be calm, and hear me patiently; it may not be impoſſible to ſave her, for this apparent death is the effect of famine."

"Of famine!" repeated Harwood, in horror and diſmay.

"What brutal—what ſavage creature could have the heart?" cried Caerleon. "Even Carloville I ſhould have thought too humane——"

"Let us have more aſſiſtance," ſaid Harwood, and haſtened to call the women of the family.

"Do," ſaid the Doctor; "for it is only by cordials and extreme care I can hope to revive her."

As for Mr. Conway, he could have fallen at his feet; ſuch were his ſenſations when he heard him give hopes of Ethelreda's reſtoration,

tion, and ſaw his ſon ſlowly recovering his almoſt departed ſpirits, though ſtill confuſed and unconſcious, owing to the perturbed ſtate of his mind, and the violent blow his head had received in falling. The Doctor judged he ſtood equally in need of reſt and care as Ethelreda, and gave his orders accordingly.

After the joy Harwood felt at the proſpect of again ſeeing two perſons ſo dear to him, and of enjoying their ſociety, one of whom he had long ceaſed to think of as belonging to this mortal ſphere, it may eaſily be imagined the deſire of knowing how ſhe was ſo unexpectedly reſtored to them predominated in his mind, and called forth all his conjectures. But knowing that for a time all enquiry was prohibited, till thoſe who alone could ſatisfy were able to liſten to them, he endeavoured to calm his curioſity by writing to Mrs. Harwood, heartily congratulating himſelf on his good fortune in never having diſtreſſed Sibilla with her ſiſter's ſuppoſed death.

CHAP. XXIX.

Thy ignominy ſleep with thee in the grave,
And not remember'd in thy epitaph!

SHAKESPEARE.

NOT many hours had elapſed after Mrs. Harwood's meeting with Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, when the phyſicians ſhe had ſent to attend her, gave it as their opinion, that ſhe was in

in the moſt imminent danger. Repeatedly ſhe called Mrs. Harwood to her, and with frantic wildneſs entreated to be releaſed: ſometimes ſhe would talk of murder, and promiſe to confeſs it if her life might be ſpared; and ſometimes ſhe would accuſe herſelf of inſtigating Carloville to kill his wife—and, ſhrieking horridly, would pray for mercy, as if the injured Ethelreda ſtood before her.

The compaſſionate Mrs. Harwood watched her with the greateſt tenderneſs, and, finding it in vain to ſoothe her diſtracted mind by words, wept over her in ſilence. Her own ſituation was uncomfortable and diſtreſſing; but that of the wretched Lady Mariamne, ſo ſtrangely fallen in her way, added perplexity and a thouſand terrible conjectures to her diſtreſſes, and made her regret that Mr. Harwood's departure had been quite ſo precipitate. But when her danger was confirmed by the phyſicians, Mrs. Harwood, thinking it a duty owing her family to inform them of it with all poſſible ſpeed, notwithſtanding the letter Mr. Carloville had undertaken to write, immediately diſpatched letters by an expreſs to the Strathener family, and through them to Sir Francis L'Eſterling at Caſino Belvedere; not knowing that unfortunate man was beyond the reach of any farther trouble from the conduct or the fate of his lady. Mrs. Harwood was not ignorant of the uneaſy terms on which they lived, and naturally concluded that ſome diſagreement of a violent nature had ſeparated Lady Mariamne and Sir Francis; that ſhe had been in fault, and had aggravated his mild temper to more than uſual oppoſition; but, that ſhe had carried her miſconduct ſuch lengths, Mrs. Harwood had not the remoteſt ſuſpicion; nor could ſhe form any other opinion,

nion, or draw any other inference from her ravings, than that the turbulence of her ſpirit, unuſed to contradiction, had thrown her into a delirious fever. She therefore, in her letter to Sir Francis, deſcribed her ſituation as highly diſtreſſing and dangerous, and entreated him to loſe no time in coming to diſpel the terrible ideas that ſeemed to have taken poſſeſſion of her mind.

Mrs. Harwood found ſome relief herſelf from informing the friends of Lady Mariamne of her ſituation (for ſhe had no expectation of her recovery), and felt a kind of reſponſibility towards them for the care of her, from which ſhe hoped to be relived by their arrival; though at the ſame time the attentions ſhe paid could not have been exceeded, had Lady Mariamne been the deareſt of her friends.

Mr. Harwood had been gone three days; and having promiſed the firſt letter he wrote ſhould fix that of his return, Mrs. Harwood began to hope ſhe ſhould ſpeedily be repaid for all her moments of anxiety by news of Ethelreda, or perhaps the certainty of ſeeing her with her huſband. But the expected time paſſed: ſhe was diſappointed, but not alarmed; ſhe made every allowance for the difficulties Harwood might have to encounter in a conference with Carloville; and checking her own inpatience, ſhe buoyed herſelf up with the hope that this ſilence ſo unuſual could mean nothing but ſucceſs.

Yet the melancholy ſcene before her, and the wild ravings of Lady Mariamne, in which ſhe uttered the names of Ethelreda and Carloville, threw a weight and dread upon her ſpirits all her reſolution could not overcome; nor could ſhe help connecting preſages of evil towards

towards her own family, with the ravings and ſuffering of Lady Mariamne. Indeed ſhe was now become ſo weak and exhauſted as ſcarcely to articulate; and it was only by the motion of her lips Mrs. Harwood perceived ſhe inceſſantly repeated their names. Her eyes were fixed, though not cloſed; ſhades ſeemed to hover over her countenance, and ſhe only breathed at intervals. Mrs. Harwood perceiving ſhe was inſenſible, retired from ſo painful a ſcene in ſorrow, and, in awful expectation of hearing ſhe was no more, again reſumed the taſk of writing to her family.

When Carloville made his eſcape from Fitz-Piers and Conway in the cottage, he was no longer actuated by any motive of ſelf-preſervation; for the ſight of Fitz-Piers and his injured ſiſter had armed his conſcience with torments againſt him, and he no longer wiſhed for life, or thought of ſhunning the puniſhment his crimes deſerved. Nor did the offended juſtice of his country appear to him ſo terrible as the reproachful countenance of Fitz-Piers, ſtern, and full of contempt; and the half-cloſed eyes and languid features of his ſiſter, the diſtreſſed tone of her voice, and the pardon ſhe pronounced for injuries ſo deep and unatoned. In a momentary paroxyſm of deſpair, he fled towards the firſt people he ſaw, and, accuſing himſelf of murder, was taken before a magiſtrate, and committed to the priſon of the county till further information could be procured; for, whether he was a madman, or guilty according to his own accuſation, it was impoſſible to determine; his name he reſolutely refuſed to declare.

Thus, without any favour or diſtinction on the ſcore of his quality (for his manners claimed

claimed none), Lord Carloville found himſelf amongſt felons in a common jail. But to him the reverſe would not have been ſtriking, had his mind been at eaſe to remark it; for, though the manners of the ſociety to which he had accuſtomed himſelf were leſs vulgar and coarſe, their principles were equally depraved.

In ſullen ſilence he obſerved the low gaming of the priſoners; he heard their oaths without ſurpriſe or diſguſt, till at laſt becoming intereſted, he joined in the game, partook of their liquor, and tried to drown conſcience and remorſe by indulging his unhappy propenſity. Some little favour, though miſtaken, was ſhown him by his keeper, becauſe he made an appearance ſuperior to the inhabitants of priſons in general; and he availed himſelf of it, ſo as to become completely intoxicated.

In this ſituation, at the mercy of a ſet of wretches, whoſe practice had been not to ſhew any, he was rifled of every thing his pockets contained, and left extended at his length for the remainder of the night, or to recover at his leiſure. But the career of this unhappy man, ſo badly begun, and ſo uniformly continued in wickedneſs, drew faſt to its concluſion. The laſt moments allowed him for repentance, he had waſted in intoxication; and, as if it was decreed that the whole tenor of his life ſhould be even, and paſs without a ſingle character or colour of good, the night of his impriſonment was the laſt of his life. He was diſcovered in the morning lying on his face, breathleſs and cold!

Various were the conjectures as to the manner and cauſe of his death raiſed in the minds of the people of the priſon: ſtrong ſuſpicions of his having made away with himſelf, at firſt occurred

occurred on the inqueſt: his having been robbed of every thing his pockets contained threw them equally ſtrong on his fellow priſoners. They were examined; but the thief, aware of the conſequences, had concealed his booty, and no clue could be obtained to diſcover his name, or the cauſe of his death; he was pronounced by the jury to have died from intoxication.

For ſome days the body was expoſed to be owned: many out of curioſity came to look upon it, but none in a ſituation or rank to have known Lord Carloville, had his features retained any likeneſs of his countenance whilſt he lived. Of his relations none knew how he had diſpoſed of himſelf, or where he was gone; nor were they anxious to diſcover; for he had joined diſgrace and infamy to a name once highly reſpected. Happy was it for the feelings of his family he died in ſuch obſcurity: they were ſpared the diſtreſs and ſhame of knowing that he had been ſuſpected of taking *poiſon*; and that the body of Frederic Lord Carloville, expoſed in a common jail, unowned, was buried by the county!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

E veramente il ſecol d'oro è queſto,
Perche ſol vince l'oro, e regna l'oro.

TASSO.

THE tumult and ſurpriſe occaſioned at Strathener by ſo many unexpected events, in which all were intereſted; Conway's return, ſo gratifying to his father; and Ethelreda's wonderful re-appearance, ſo joyful to Harwood, and ſo aſtoniſhing to all who had heard of her death, afforded matter of converſation and enquiry that ſeemed inexhauſtible, and partly ſuperſeded thoſe melancholy concerns that had occupied the whole family ſince the death of Sir Francis L'Eſterling.

The recovery of Mrs. Conway, the return of his neice, and ſo unexpectedly meeting with the two perſons for whoſe welfare he had ſeperately felt ſo ſtrongly intereſted, had raiſed the ſpirits and hopes of Dr. Felton; ſo that, notwithſtanding the ſtate of weakneſs and inſenſibility in which Ethelreda reached Strathener, he pronounced nothing but repoſe and ſuſtenance neceſſary to her recovery.

The funeral of Lord Trecaſtle over, the new Earl, in the preſence of his uncle, declared he had a will in his poſſeſſion: but his father having told him formerly, he wiſhed it to be opened and read in the preſence of his whole family, he choſe to defer it till he could hear of Lady Octavia, whom he now conſidered as his only ſiſter,

ſiſter, if indeed ſhe was worthy of being ſo conſidered: of that he meant to take every care to inform himſelf before he wrote to her on his father's death. Mr. Conway ſtill wiſhed to conſider her as his ſon's wife, and repeatedly aſſured his nephew, he was perſuaded Lady Octavia would clear her conduct from every imputation in the moſt ſatisfactory manner: in ſhort, no accuſation was brought againſt her but that of having left the houſe with her woman; and though previous circumſtances had pointed their ſuſpicions towards the Count de Clerac, no inference whatever could be drawn from her conduct, that he was concerned in her flight. Mr. Conway concluded, by declaring it was his opinion, that a deſire to meet with Lady Mariamne was the ſole motive of her precipitate removal.

To Lord Trecaſtle, who had been preſent at the marriage, theſe arguments were very inconcluſive. "I cannot tell," ſaid he, "why Octavia conſented to this marriage: ſhe was equally averſe to it with my couſin—their conduct is a myſtery I cannot penetrate. As for Conway, I can gueſs no motive that could induce him to an act which he performed with the moſt deſperate reluctance; and I fear Octavia only conſented to ſecure that portion of her uncle's legacy which Lord Poynings, by his will, left in my father's power to withhold in caſe of diſobedience; or more properly, to protect a young woman with ſo large an independence from becoming the prey of a fortune-hunter."

"And the end is completely anſwered," ſaid Mr. Conway, with quickneſs.

"I am not quite ſo well aware of that," rejoined the new Earl: "If I am not miſtaken, a diſcretionary

a diſcretionary power devolves to me—I pity my couſin, and the kind of tyranny he has experienced I will not be inſtrumental in continuing: I believe I am juſtified in ſaying that marriage was not a valid one, unleſs I am materially deceived in my information."

"My Lord!—My Lord!" cried Mr. Conway—"Take care how you act in this affair: the world may give you credit for motives not quite ſo generous as thoſe you may chooſe to pretend to.—You are a very young man, and known to have been a very extravagant one—and it may be ſurmiſed that the Poynings legacy——"

"Take care, ſir, what you inſinuate!—I have money enough to ſupport my preſent dignity, or my juſt pretenſions to higher honours; and take notice, Mr. Conway, I have long known you.—As for Henry—I look up to him with reſpect:—I honour his with regard to me—and would forego my claims in his favour; but he is too high-minded, too noble to accept them—nor does he ſtand in need of titles to mark his ſuperiority!"

"This is very—highly gratifying to me, certainly!" ſaid Mr. Conway, returning to his caution.—"You ſurpriſed me, I confeſs, by the warmth of your manner, my Lord: I felt a little hurt at your taking up an affair I partly conſidered as my own—but I wave it. Nothing is more common than that an heir newly arrived at his dignities ſhould quarrel with his relations; that I will make any ſacrifice to avoid, for *your ſake*, and I beg we may continue friends."

"With all my heart!—I have the higheſt reſpect in the world for my couſin; and I wiſh, for your ſake, he did not monopolize all the

ſincerity

ſincerity of the family." Lord Trecaſtle finiſhed with a ſmile, and they ſeparated.

To Mr. Conway, the hints thrown out by his nephew were alarming, and had nearly thrown him off his guard; but, confiding in his own talents for intrigueing policy, he thought it impoſſible he could have been diſcovered by a *ſhallow boy*, and ſpeedily regained his compoſure. The invalidity of the marriage he laughed at—none of the forms had been omitted; and if the hearts of the parties were always to be taken into the account, and on them to reſt the queſtion, it would be an alarming one indeed, and involve moſt of the families in the kingdom.

The iſſue of all his applications was at hand: he was aſſured that the very patent was made out; nay, he had even been informed it was ſent—but that was impoſſible, becauſe he had not received it. He gueſſed there was ſome miſtake—and every gazette that arrived, that regiſter of peers and bankrupts, he anxiouſly examined, in hopes it might prove the herald of his own dignities. The new Lord Trecaſtle's inſinuations he looked upon as the wild and ambitious dream of a boy, who, not content with thoſe attained, looks up to higher honours; and conſcious of his own importance, he reſted all his pretenſions on his paſt ſervices, and the very evident neceſſity of ſecuring his future ones.

Conway, whoſe admirable conſtitution had not given way under the numberleſs attacks his health and his mind had equally received, was ſo much recruited the following day as to be able to join the family in the evening. He had ſeen his mother, who could only expreſs by her looks that ſhe knew him, and the joy

ſhe

ſhe felt at a ſight ſo unexpected and ſo unhoped for.—He had been aſſured that Lady Carloville was recovering, and Dr. Felton confidently anſwered for her reſtoration; though he would not allow him to ſee her; or to trouble her with enquiries—Mr. Harwood he had laid under the ſame reſtrictions. Conway had ſatisfied his and Lord Trecaſtle's curioſity as far as he was able; but Ethelreda alone could account to them for her own extraordinary appearance; and the abſtinence that had reduced her to the laſt ſtage of weakneſs, and almoſt to death. Conway concluded that old Llewellyn and his wife were both dead, and that Ethelreda had nearly died in conſequence.

As to Harwood and Trecaſtle, they could neither of them ceaſe to expreſs their admiration of the firmneſs and courage ſhown by Ethelreda in her ſecluſion; and the latter with warmth congratulated Conway in having recovered ſuch a treaſure.

Conway's colour changed as he anſwered; and Harwood, whoſe quick eye had not failed to remark it, inſtantly recollected Octavia.—"That treaſure, my Lord, is now under my care; and no man can feel more gratefully the ſtrong obligation that will always bind Lady Carloville's relations to Conway and his family, for the part he has had in preſerving her.—I have this morning written to Mrs. Harwood; and as ſoon as Ethelreda is ſufficiently reſtored to bear a journey, we ſhall leave you, my Lord; very ſtrongly impreſſed, I anſwer for myſelf, with a ſenſe of your hoſpitality and kindneſs.—Your own feeling I am ſure will prompt you to wave all the ceremonies of ſeeing your family before we depart.—I will confeſs I wiſh as much as poſſible to ſpare my

ſiſter,

ſiſter, and all of us—I need not ſay it will be painful to her to find herſelf in this houſe, and that time alone can bring that degree of compoſure neceſſary for her health.—My good fellow!" continued Harwood, taking Conway's hand, which he ſhook with affection—"I am grieved it ſhould be our lot to ſeparate!"

"Mr. Harwood," ſaid Lord Trecaſtle, "I am proud to acknowledge my obligations to you in their utmoſt extent—obligations that I am perſuaded I cannot repay, and that every freſh requeſt I make to you adds to the debt.—Let me write a poſtſcript to your letter—Join your wiſhes to my prayers, that Mrs. Harwood will meet her ſiſter here!—You ſhall not repent your compliance—and in future diſpoſe of me, of this houſe, and of yourſelf in it, as you pleaſe."

To a requeſt ſo preſſing, Harwood knew not how to oppoſe a denial: yet Conway, married to Octavia, muſt, he knew, be to Ethelreda an inſuperable objection to her remaining. He looked uncertain, and caſt a glance of enquiry towards Conway, whoſe countenance and agitation called for all his compaſſion.

"If there be a man in the world who is truly enviable," ſaid Lord Trecaſtle pointing to his couſin, "that Harwood is the man!—It carries, at preſent, I confeſs, ſomething the air of a paradox!" he added, with one of his malicious ſmiles.

"I own there is a circumſtance——" ſaid Harwood.

"Aſk me for no explanation! cried Conway—"I was mad, frantic, deſperate—In the raſhneſs of deſpair, I have prepared a

puniſhment for myſelf more ſevere than that I had reſolved upon. Had I died that inſtant, I ſhould have been ſpared the miſery of this!"

"Conway?" ſaid Lord Trecaſtle with aſſumed gravity—"your paſſions are not leſs violent than mine have been; but I hope nevertheleſs to ſee you ſoon arrived at the ſame happy pitch of calmneſs: believe me, no intereſt or authority of mine ſhall be wanting in your favour—and I am perſuaded that it is by no means impoſſible to releaſe you from your preſent engagement. I think I can convince Mr. Harwood your affections never entered into the compact."

The confidence with which Lord Trecaſtle ſpoke, equally ſurpriſed his couſin and Mr. Harwood: as for Conway, he was not without hope that his own previous marriage with Ethelreda would have ſome avail, though at the ſame time ſhe was not, as he believed her to be, freed from her firſt engagements; there was ſtill a myſtery to be cleared up, to effect which he ardently longed to ſee Fitz-Piers, who alone he believed could procure him the information he wiſhed for from the lady whom Carloville had declared to be his wife; but whether it was merely in atonement to the character of this lady in equity and not in law, he was at a loſs to determine. If the latter, then was Ethelreda at once releaſed from all ties, except thoſe that bound her to him; and he was equally freed from the trammels of Octavia.

Conway's interview with his father was much calmer than he expected, though ſcarcely more ſatisfactory. The latter, ſo ſkilled in concealing his feelings, betrayed no extraordinary emotion at the ſight of his ſon, whom a few

few hours before he had conſidered as no longer in exiſtence, leſt Conway ſhould take advantage of any ſign of affection, and conſtrue it to the advancement of his own deſigns. He was minute in his enquiries about Conway's marriage with Ethelreda—their meeting ſince her ſuppoſed death—and this laſt viſit to the Caſtle, in which he had been the means of preſerving her life, nearly exhauſted. But he heard the ſurpriſing detail with ſo much coolneſs, and anſwered the ardent expreſſions of affection Conway profuſely beſtowed upon her with ſo little pleaſure, that nothing but the ſtrong intereſt in the ſtory he was relating, could have prevented him from ſeeing with how much indifference his animated recital was received: but he was ſpared the pain of knowing he had ſtill a hard taſk to perform to reconcile his father, even ſhould the numberleſs other apparent impediments to his wiſhes diſappear; for Mr. Conway forebore to be explicit on the ſubject, and Conway was not ſufficiently collected to gather any thing from hints or interrogatories.

Lady Trecaſtle, arrayed in her mourning, which ſo added to the natural beauty as to put her in perfect good humour with all around her, and ſomewhat recovering from the depreſſion of ſpirits the misfortunes in her family had occaſioned, was anxious to aſſure Mr. Conway and his ſon that Mrs. Conway was certainly mending, whom, to do her juſtice, ſhe had moſt carefully attended.

Conway, with a countenance and voice equally expreſſive, aſſured her he received pleaſure, as great as the gratitude he felt, in being convinced by her looks, that her health had not ſuffered from her kind attentions.—

Mr. Conway made a longer and more deliberate acknowledgment; to which Lady Trecaſtle paid the politeſt ear, and anſwered with a graceful bow. Lord Trecaſtle and Mr. Harwood each received, but a moment before, a large packet of letters, which, as ſome of them came by expreſs, took up the whole of their attention.

"My Lord! Captain Conway tells me Mr. Fitz-Piers is at St. Siffrid's!" cried Lady Trecaſtle: "Pray ſend him an invitation—he is alone there!"

"I have ſomething of conſequence, Mr. Harwood—" ſaid Lord Trecaſtle riſing with a tone and countenance equally diſcompoſed.

"I too have letters," ſaid Harwood leaving the table, "of the ſame import, I ſuppoſe."

"Mine are by expreſs!"

"By expreſs!" repeated Lady Trecaſtle—"You alarm me exceedingly!"

"It is a needleſs alarm, Roſamond! Believe me this is not a new cauſe of diſquiet."—"Mr. Harwood, I'll attend you to another room—Conway!"

He inſtantly followed, too anxious about every concern of Harwood's not to feel grateful for the ſummons that ſhortened a painful ſuſpenſe.

The letters concerned Lady Mariamne; thoſe to Lord Trecaſtle, from Mr. Carloville; to Mr. Harwood, from his wife. The firſt contained an account of Mrs. Harwood's meeting with Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, the diſordered ſtate of her mind, her violent illneſs, and the doubtful opinion of her phyſicians. Thoſe written by Mrs. Harwood, addreſſed to Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Lord Trecaſtle, were both directed to Strathener; by this Harwood

wood perceived ſhe had not then received his letter, in which he mentioned the death of Sir Francis and the old Earl.

Lord Trecaſtle, in ſpite of all the rage he had formerly expreſſed againſt his unhappy ſiſter, could not read Mrs. Harwood's pathetic detail, eſpecially her appeal to Sir Francis L'Eſterling, without feeling all his ſorrow renewed. He begged Conway to queſtion the meſſenger, in order to judge if it were poſſible for him to ſee his ſiſter yet alive; and was giving urgent orders for his departure, when he ſaw a hack-chaiſe paſs the farther window and drive up to the porch.

"If I am aſked for, remember I am from home!" cried he to a ſervant.

The door was opened; two perſons came out of the chaiſe and entered the hall: Lord Trecaſtle heard himſelf aſked for—"In which room is your Lord?—I muſt ſee him immediately!" uttered the viſitor in an imperious tone not unknown to Lord Trecaſtle—and immediately the door opened, and into the room flung Lady Octavia! She threw herſelf into a chair, and burſt into tears and words at the ſame moment—"Nothing," cried ſhe, "ſhall ever bring me to theſe doors again to be refuſed admittance!—This houſe ſo lately my father's!"

"It would have been as well, madam, that you had never left this houſe, and then you would not have expoſed yourſelf to ſuch a denial: but my orders were miſtaken, if you or any other perſon was denied an entrance; this houſe is at your ſervice, if you think proper to remain in it on my terms—It was *myſelf* I ordered to be denied."

"Well, is not that exactly the ſame? I knew in decorum you muſt be at home, and I was determined to ſee you!—Yes, I will do

myſelf juſtice againſt you all!—I will tell the world how I have been trepanned into a marriage to ſerve your own ſiniſter views!—I will unmaſque you all!"

"I cannot ſtay now for the diſcovery, having buſineſs of importance on my hands," ſaid Trecaſtle coolly—"You will find Roſamond in the dining-room."—"Mr. Harwood, I am ready to attend you: my horſes will take us the firſt ten miles, and I have diſpatched ſervants to meet us with freſh ones."

Lady Octavia ſprung from her chair to the door—"You ſhall not go! I know this is a ſcheme to avoid me—If you do, I will leave the houſe this moment never to return to it!" And ſhe fell at his feet in a perfect agony of vehemence and paſſion. Lord Trecaſtle took her in his arms to the room where Lady Trecaſtle was ſitting with her uncle, in expectation of their return from their private conference.—"I leave Octavia in your care, Roſamond; Conway will explain to you the cauſe of our ſudden departure."

"Conway—Conway!" ſcreamed Octavia: "is he here?—Oh, I ſhall expire!"

"Pray don't go, my Lord!" ſaid Lady Trecaſtle: "She will really go into fits!"—But Trecaſtle, half frantic himſelf at ſuch tormenting delays, broke from them and haſtened to his carriage with Harwood, and, as he quitted the room, Conway entered it.

This laſt circumſtance was too much for Lady Octavia: Conway ſtarted at the ſight of her, and ſhe returned his conſternation by a ſcream that threw the whole party into perplexity. She wept, ſhe raved, ſhe laughed by turns, and, altogether, they were at a loſs what to do with her: no frantic creature confined to a cell could have exhibited greater varieties of humour

humour—and all, except her anger towards her brother, was affected. For, to Conway, though ſhe ſeemed ſo averſe to him, ſhe was in her heart more diſpoſed to be reconciled; having drawn a concluſion not very flattering to her vanity, that the Count de Clerac aimed only at her fortune.

"My dear Lady Octavia!" ſaid her uncle in a ſoothing tone, "how has Conway offended you?"

"Oh!" cried ſhe, putting her hands to her head and ſpringing to the other ſide of the room—"What a voice! 'tis worſe than a cannon diſcharged at my ear!"

"Surely, madam," ſaid Mr. Conway with gravity, "your head muſt be in a ſtrange ſtate!"

"There again!—worſe than a watch-man's rattle!

"Pray madam," turning to Lady Trecaſtle, "will you order me another room?"

"By all means!" ſaid Lady Trecaſtle riſing.

"Pray, don't move! I can't think of remaining here—Your ladyſhip muſt know how my brother's conduct is meant to operate on me!—But, my dear, did you ever ſee ſuch a figure in your life as I am?—I'm not human! —But I don't care how I look here—that is a ſatisfaction!"

"Will you alter your dreſs, Lady Octavia?"

"Oh, not for the world!—People might think it was done on their account!"

"Lady Trecaſtle," ſaid Conway, "I muſt take the liberty of aſking for your company in another room—I will detain you only a moment. Lord Trecaſtle has deputed me to inform you——"

"If it is any thing about me, ſir, you may ſay it here!" ſaid Octavia.

"You, madam, are as much, or indeed more concerned than Lady Trecaſtle; but I am fearful of hurting your head." Conway then gave the letters into Lady Trecaſtle's hand, letting her underſtand they related to Mariamne, and deſiring her to diſcloſe their melancholy contents to Lady Octavia and his father; at the ſame time he informed her that ſomething of conſequence would detain him from her ſociety the remainder of the evening.

"But there is ſomething of greater conſequence to detain you here, Henry," ſaid Mr. Conway.

"I beg, ſir, you will not inſinuate that I am of any conſequence to your ſon, or he to me!"

"It is to avoid all ſuch concluſions, madam, that I withdraw!" ſaid Conway; "and if ever we meet again, I hope we ſhall be of ſtill leſs conſequence to each other than we are at preſent."

"What have I done to deſerve this treatment?" exclaimed the mortified Octavia, in tears of paſſion and vexation.

Mr. Conway tried firſt to prevent his ſon from leaving the room, and then to pacify her; but equally unſucceſsful in each attempt, they at length became ſilent, and left Lady Trecaſtle an opportunity of diſcloſing the ſubject of the letters.

The ſame rumour that had informed Lady Octavia of her father's death ſo ſpeedily (for ſhe was at the hot-wells), brought the report of Sir Francis L'Eſterling's deceaſe; and the report ran that he was killed in a duel by Lord Carloville. Octavia, in her violence, had never recollected her ſiſter, though ſhe was almoſt

the

the only perſon ſhe had ever had much affection for. The ſudden account of her illneſs, and, as it might almoſt be conſidered, of her death, raiſed another violent ſtorm of tears, in which ſorrow had more ſhare—and ſhe ſat ſobbing with her head on a ſopha-pillow, peeviſhly controverting every argument of conſolation offered by Lady Trecaſtle or her uncle.

CHAP. XXXI.

Conceit in weakeſt bodies, ſtrongeſt works.

SHAKESPEARE.

ETHELREDA, ſo ſtrangely become an inhabitant of Strathener Caſtle, could not ceaſe to wonder at the novelty of her own ſituation; for, weak and unſettled as her ſenſes ſtill were, ſhe could not ſufficiently recollect any thing that had paſſed previous to the funeral of Sir Francis L'Eſterling; and ſince that time to her removal to the very chamber where ſhe at preſent lay, ſhe could remember nothing but falling on the ſteps that lead from behind the altar to the ſubterraneous abode. Sometimes the idea of being in the power of Carloville would occur to her; and the ſight of Dr. Felton partly confirmed her in it, from a confuſed notion ſhe retained of his features, and of his having attended her when ſhe firſt fell into the hands of her tyrant. Such a conjecture was ill calcula-

ted to compoſe the wandering and uneaſy ſtate of Ethelreda's ſpirits. She pondered, without coming to any certain concluſion, upon her preſent myſterious ſituation, without courage to enquire, leſt the truth ſhe dreaded ſhould be confirmed. But there was ſomething in the countenance of Dr. Felton that ſet aſide all ſuſpicion of fraud or unkindneſs, and even re-aſſured the timid mind of Ethelreda. He as anxiouſly wiſhed to know her ſtory, as ſhe was deſirous of information on her own account. A meſſage from lady Trecaſtle, enquiring after her health, by Dr. Felton, gave the firſt information of her abode at Strathener; for the Doctor explained to her, at her deſire, who Lady Trecaſtle was, and that he had prevented her from viſiting his patient till ſhe was more recovered. In the courſe of their converſation, Ethelreda learnt that Conway had brought her from St. Siffrid's, and that Mr. Harwood was, as well as herſelf, Lord Trecaſtle's inmate.

The poſſibility of ſeeing perhaps her ſiſter was a thought that Ethelreda dwelt on with rapture, and nearly exhauſted herſelf in expreſſing the pleaſure ſhe anticipated; till Dr. Felton, in order to divert the ſubject from her thoughts, that ſeemed entirely to occupy them, ventured to aſk if ſhe remembered ever having ſeen him before?—"Madam," ſaid he, "you do not know how much, and by what ſtrange circumſtances, I was intereſted for you—how much I was grieved and diſappointed when I loſt you, and could no where trace you to your concealment; for I acknowledge I took the liberty to ſearch and enquire for you, as well as deſcription would ſerve; and that, in *your* caſe, ought to have guided me—I have ſeen but few ſuch forms."

"Your

"Your friendſhip, ſir, would have been a conſolation to me, could I have availed myſelf of it," ſaid Ethelreda. "Now that you tell me I am in the protection of my friends, I can aſk for it without fear of involving you in perplexity."

"I am told, madam, your name is Carloville: if ſo, I have the claims of relationſhip; and be aſſured I ſhall not be ſlow in proving them."

"Of relationſhip!" exclaimed Ethelreda with horror—"Do you mean to betray me? Have you ſaved my life to make it miſerable?—Where is Mr. Harwood? I will ſee him this inſtant!"

Dr. Felton, terrified at the alarm he had occaſioned his patient to ſuffer, entreated her to believe him incapable of injuring her, or of making a bad uſe of the relationſhip he had preſumed to claim as an honour—"I had a relation," continued he, "married to Lord Carloville."

"To Lord Carloville!" ſaid Ethelreda with ſtrong emphaſis.

"Yes—to Lord Carloville of Belhaven, the father of that Carloville whom all this family have ſo much reaſon to hate; and I believe," added he ſighing, "that I too ſhould hold the name in abhorrence, if I dared to queſtion as far as my ſuſpicions lead me."

"There is ſomething in your countenance that tells me I may truſt you!" ſaid Ethelreda, looking moſt anxiouſly at the Doctor: "I am Ethelreda L'Eſterling—once married to that very Carloville!—But I am telling you what you already know."

"I could not account for the name I heard as yours," ſaid the Doctor; "for I thought you were the wife of Captain Conway, ſeparated.

ated by his family——Perhaps you mean to miſlead me; for I cannot help thinking thoſe words uttered in the delirium of a fever were not merely accidental."

"Let me beſeech you to think them ſo!" ſaid ſhe; "or rather never to remember them at all, nor mention them to Mr. Harwood or Conway. I repeat to you, ſir, I have no right to any name but the one you have heard as mine."

"I will believe every thing you would have me," ſaid the Doctor—"Indeed I cannot chooſe; for when you ſpeak, a ſpell ſeems to hang over me: if I were a younger man, I would attempt to account for ſo ſtrange a faſcination," he added with a ſmile.

Ethelreda tried to anſwer the Doctor with ſomething like chearfulneſs; but ſhe failed in the effort, and could ſcarcely reſtrain her tears as ſhe returned her thanks to Lady Trecaſtle's meſſage; and they ſeparated, for it was late.

It was ſtill later, however, before the greateſt part of the Caſtle gueſts began to take repoſe, for the ſound of carriages announced the arrival of more viſitors; and Lady Octavia, not come to any reſolution whether ſhe ſhould ſleep there or not, had given Lady Trecaſtle no deciſive anſwer, in reply to the many entreaties ſhe had made to take ſome repoſe after her fatiguing ſorrow; which, too noiſy and violent to raiſe much compaſſion, had nevertheleſs been ſufficiently tireſome to all condemned to hear her exclamations and complainings.

At the ſound of voices and company approaching through the hall, Lady Octavia haſtily jumped from the ſopha, and adjuſted the feathers of her riding-hat, which were much diſplaced, before a large mirror.

"What

"What a figure!—My dear Lady Trecaſtle! who ſent you your mourning? Don't you think, as I am rather tall and ſlender, my robe might be more flowing? Your turban is very elegant; but, as I am very fair, would not a black crape be more becoming? And I ſhould like more feathers, and higher. But your hair is cut charmingly! Did they ſend you a hair-dreſſer with your clothes?"

"No, my dear! and I adviſe you to write for a chignon," ſaid Lady Trecaſtle, a little piqued at the criticiſm her dreſs had undergone; for her figure was full as fine as Lady Octavia's, her complexion as delicate, and her treſſes more luxuriant.

"Oh, I have a profuſion of hair!" cried Octavia——But this intereſting diſcuſſion could go no farther, from the appearance of Lord Trecaſtle and the gueſts who accompanied him. Theſe were Mr. and Mrs. Harwood, and Mr. Carloville.

"You are ſurpriſed, Roſamond!" ſaid Lord Trecaſtle.

"And not leſs pleaſed at ſeeing you ſo agreeably accompanied.—Mrs. Harwood, I am quite happy at your return, ſo perfectly recovered as you appear to be!"

Mrs. Harwood returned Lady Trecaſtle's obliging ſpeeches: and then Lady Octavia, advancing with a meaſured pace and tone equally affected, "hoped ſhe had not been an invalid? Did ſhe go abroad for her health?"——She thought it had been pleaſure or economy. Mr. Harwood ſtared without anſwering; he thought to ſtupidity and want of feeling ſhe need not have added ill-breeding. Mrs. Harwood, though ſurpriſed, replied to her with good humour; but Trecaſtle bit his lip, and turned away evidently in anger. "Mrs. Harwood,"

ſaid

ſaid he, addreſſing Lady Trecaſtle, "had taken up her quarters at the neareſt town with her family; but ſhe has complied with my entreaties, and as Mr. Harwood had no arguments of force to oppoſe them, I have prevailed on her and Mr. Carloville her eſcort to return with me here."

"I have many acknowledgements to make to Mr. Carloville for his care of Mrs. Harwood and her family," ſaid Harwood. "And I," added ſhe, "ſhould be deficient in gratitude, if I did not endeavour to expreſs how highly I eſtimate his attentions." Mrs. Harwood then expreſſed a wiſh to retire: ſhe was not ignorant of her ſiſter's abode in the Caſtle; but, knowing ſhe could not ſee her that night, ſhe hoped to ſleep away the tedious interval, though the anxiety ſhe endured ſeemed to forebode her paſſing the night in wakeful impatience.

Lord Trecaſtle and Mr. Carloville went to a private room, that he might hear more in detail the account of Lady Mariamne's death. This had already been given circumſtantially by Mrs. Harwood; and as Mr. Carloville knew nothing of his brother, nor of his connexion with Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, his ſurpriſe and indignation were equally raiſed, when he heard the charges brought againſt him by the Strathener family, in addition to the known injuries with which he had repaid the too eaſy and unſuſpecting Sir Roger.

It was reſolved upon by Lord Trecaſtle, that the body of his ſiſter ſhould be brought to Strathener for interment. Mr. Carloville informed him, that many ſtrange reports were circulating at Southampton; theſe, he thought, had they reached Mrs. Harwood, would have been highly diſtreſſing to her: he had therefore

(he

(he ſaid) taken the liberty of urging Mrs. Harwood to leave the place as ſoon as Lady Mariamne no longer needed her care—That ſhe had left her own ſervants behind to receive his orders, and as the only valuables conſiſted in ſome rich trinkets, ſuch as ladies carry in their pockets, and a letter caſe, ſhe had given them into his poſſeſſion, and at his requeſt had ſealed them up in an envelope. This packet Mr. Carloville now took from his pocket, and put into Lord Trecaſtle's hand.

Lord Trecaſtle took it, and looked mournfully at the ſeals for a few moments without breaking them: he ſeemed unable to ſpeak, and they ſeparated for the night.

CHAP. XXXII.

All places that the eye of Heaven viſits,
Are, to the wiſe man, ports and happy havens.
SHAKESPEARE.

Per tutto è buona ſtanza, ov' altri goda
Ed ogni ſtanza al valent' uomo è patria.
GUARINI.

THOUGH it was late in the evening when Conway made his eſcape from the turbulent Octavia, he reſolved not to paſs the night in ſuſpenſe, but haſten to St. Siffrid's, and, by means of Fitz-Piers, whom he expected to find there, clear up every obſcurity that ſtill remained to cloud his future happineſs. At all events

events, to avoid Octavia was his fixed determination; and if that firſt fatal engagement with Carloville ſtill divided him from the only woman in the world in whoſe ſociety his imagination centered all felicity—ſhe alone who poſſeſſed influence over his mind to reſtore him from frantic paſſion to reaſon, from all the violent and deſperate reſolutions of diſtraction, to underſtand the value and feel the duties of his exiſtence—From her deciſion alone he was determined, after having fully explained his conduct and its motives with regard to his marriage with Octavia, to make no appeal. Perhaps he felt conſcious, or hoped, that Ethelreda would not pronounce a ſentence wounding to his feelings or her own; or perhaps ſome reſerve that lurked behind theſe mental reſolutions deceived him into a momentary belief, that whatſoever ſhe ſhould reſolve, he had ſelf-command enough to ſubmit, and by this obedience make ſome atonement for the ſorrows and alarms he had cauſed her to ſuffer. It was with the bitterneſs and moſt humiliating regret he recalled to his mind his raſh and ill-judged renunciation of the ſervice in which he was engaged at the very moment when his honour was pledged to riſk his life in an unknown and perhaps dangerous enterpriſe; nor could he recollect, without ſhame and apprehenſion, that this diſgraceful proof of a violent and uncontrollable temper, though it might not already. muſt ſhortly be known to Ethelreda, with circumſtances that muſt ſink him in her eſtimation for ever. So fully had his mind been occupied by other occurrences, he had had no time ſince his recovery to gain any information on a point that ſo nearly touched his reputation, and

conſequently

conſequently the repoſe of his life. He had tranſiently learned that another officer was appointed to the duty from which he had ſuffered himſelf to be driven by perſonal reſentment; and he knew not what colour had been given to conduct ſo diſgraceful that his cheeks were tinged with red whenever the recollection ſhot acroſs his mind, as it frequently did in the few ſhort hours of ſolitude that had paſſed ſince his recovery. To return to the rank he had renounced he believed impoſſible; and, too fully convinced of his unworthineſs to wiſh for Ethelreda's pardon, he only deſired to be aſcertained of her future deſtination, to receive her laſt commands, and then take leave of his native country for ever; to end his days in ſome foreign naval ſervice, unknown, and in a ſubordinate ſtation; and in perſonal hardſhip loſe, if poſſible, the recollection of himſelf.

Full of theſe wild imaginations, Conway reached the Caſtle. It was dark; and the wind, which blew ſtrong from the ſouth, brought in the tide with a heavy ſwell and hollow ſound that reminded him of the dangerous cavern where he once ſo nearly periſhed. He thought of Ethelreda's terror, and of the gratitude ſhe expreſſed to him for her ſafety; every ſentence was impreſſed on his memory; he repeated them as he walked on towards the beach, reſolved to take a laſt look at that ſhore where he had preſerved a life ſo precious.

The wind was riſing to a tempeſt; the ſky became darker; and, from the increaſed agitation of the ſea, its whole ſurface exhibited a luminous appearance inexpreſſibly grand and beautiful. Conway's thoughts and reaſonings on his own ſituation ſuffered a momentary interruption

interruption in the contemplation of a phenomenon, natural and frequent as it is, ſtill unaccounted for. From his profeſſion, he had often witneſſed ſimilar appearances, and, fond of nature, had ſometimes made them ſubjects of inveſtigation at his leiſure hours. He haſtened towards a point of rock againſt which the waves broke with greater fury, and diſcovered Fitz-Piers, who, ſtanding on its eminence, ſeemed to take ſingular pleaſure in the ſtorm. "Mr. Morgan!" cried Fitz-Piers deſcending from the height.

"Fitz-Piers, I believe!" ſaid Conway in anſwer, and diſcovered by his voice to Fitz-Piers that he was not Mr. Morgan—"I was in ſearch of you," continued he, "though not exactly in this ſpot did I expect to find you. Nevertheleſs, I have made an appointment here, which I begin to apprehend for many reaſons will not be kept; the ſtormy evening, I ſuppoſe, will paſs for an excuſe."

"I do not like that Morgan," ſaid Conway; "if you mean the Strathener chaplain."

"The ſame—Do you know much of him—of his character? Has he been long chaplain to Lord Trecaſtle?"

"The man has been rather obſequious to me than otherwiſe," ſaid Conway; yet I have an unconquerable repugnance toward him. Can I have ſo raſcally a nature as to diſlike him becauſe he once did me a great ſervice!"

"Not if I can judge of your diſpoſition!" ſaid Fitz-Piers warmly—"I have the ſame prejudices againſt this man, though I have ſcarcely ever exchanged a word with him—But can you tell me how long he has been patronized by your family?"

"I beg your pardon!" cried Conway, recollecting he had not anſwered Fitz-Piers's former

former queſtion—" I have no memory, unleſs I can aſſiſt it by circumſtances—Can you tell how long it is ſince your couſin, Carloville, married the daughter of ſir Roger L'Eſterling?"

" Not exactly—" ſaid Fitz-Piers, muſing —" Did he marry them?"

" Becauſe," continued Conway, purſuing his own recollections, " it was Carloville who introduced him to Caerleon; and Sir Francis L'Eſterling, at his requeſt, promiſed him the living at the death of the worthy old Lewis, who never officiated after the funeral of Sir Roger. He was a favourite with Caerleon, becauſe he read the news-papers and talked politics to my uncle till he could cajole him to do what he pleaſed."

" It is of no moment now," ſaid Fitz-Piers, " as he did not marry them; but I have heard it ſuggeſted he was never properly ordained."

" But, by Heavens, it is of conſequence!" exclaimed Conway with ſurpriſing vehemence of voice and manner—" Twice he has married me."

" Twice, Conway!—You twice married!" repeated Fitz-Piers.—" If you are mad, I ſhall not be much ſurpriſed."

" This is no jeſt," ſaid Conway with ſolemnity: " I muſt ſee this man—I muſt be ſatisfied on a point of the higheſt import; and yet—I know not whether it will inſure the happineſs or miſery of my future life."

" Then I ſuppoſe you are not quite certain whether you like your wives or not?"

" I pardon your levity, Fitz-Piers, becauſe you cannot know how I am circumſtanced—how cruelly—"

" You have two wives!—Is not that it?"

" Again!"

"Again!" angrily exclaimed Conway; "if you cannot hear me with decency, I have nothing further to ſay to you."

"Excuſe me," ſaid Fitz-Piers with good humour—"I had not any idea of offending you on a ſubject that ſeemed to me ſo unlike reality. But I have no expectation of ſeeing this man now—Let us go towards the Caſtle."

"I had rather we went to this houſe."

"I then cannot go with you, as our conference muſt be private—Say nothing of me, nor of the appointment; Morgan will think I have broken a promiſe to him." Whilſt they were ſpeaking, ſome one approached and paſſed without ſpeaking. They walked on a few ſteps; Fitz-Piers whiſpered Conway, "My buſineſs with him, as well as yours, is to diſcover his real character: leave him to me—I muſt ſee him alone, and will follow you to the Caſtle."

Conway conſented, and, walking quickly on, left them to their conference; his mind full of confuſed ideas, hopes, doubts, and all the long train of uncertainties, that ſuch hints as thoſe of Fitz-Piers muſt naturally raiſe in the mind of one ſo intricately circumſtanced as Conway; not knowing whether to rejoice or lament in the poſſibility of being ſet at liberty by diſcovering the fictitious character of Morgan, ſince he was ſenſible that his claim to Ethelreda, or Octavia's to him, hung by the ſame tenure.—"Ah!" thought he, with regret, "had this impoſtor been the curate of St. Siffrid's when the vile Carloville ſo artfully procured the favour of the unſuſpecting Sir Roger!—But that wretch, perhaps appriſed of his aſſumed character, took care he ſhould not

not appear till he had ſecured the unfortunate Ethelreda beyond all chance of loſing her!"

Tormented and agitated by a thouſand painful apprehenſions, Conway began to think his friend would not return at all; for his impatience had multiplied the two hours of his abſence into half the night. He continued pacing the outer court till the ſound of footſteps told him they were at hand. He heard Morgan's voice, as if humble and entreating: Fitz-Piers anſwered him in a different tone; but Conway, who had retreated towards the inner gate that he might not hear, could draw no concluſion from it—and preſently he was joined by Fitz-Piers, and they entered the Caſtle together.

Conway did not ſpeak, the other was equally ſilent, till they reached the door of a room; a ſervant preceded them with lights, Fitz-Piers took a key from his pocket with which he unlocked the door, and they ſeated themſelves at a table covered with papers—"Theſe," ſaid Fitz-Piers, laying his hand on them, "are of too much conſequence to be truſted to my care at preſent: do you think Lord Trecaſtle would take them into his?—But," continued he, "I have no right to involve him in my concerns without his knowledge: will you hear their contents and relate them to him?—I own I place great dependence on your aſſiſtance and that of your family—You all hate Carloville?"

"And ſhall eternally! bitterly!" cried Conway ſtarting from his chair.

"But what of Morgan?—Is he ſuch another raſcal? a cheat? an impoſtor?"

"Carloville is almoſt every thing that an unprincipled reprobate can be: Morgan has made

made ſome extraordinary confeſſions to me; and I am almoſt aſhamed to own that I have promiſed to intercede for him with ſome of the injured perſons whoſe reſentment he moſt dreads, though I frankly told him I could give him but little hopes from my ſervices, for, as Carloville's relation, I ſhall be ſeen by them all through an ill-coloured medium.

"He is not in orders, then?" aſked Conway with an agitated voice.

"Yes: he was ordained at leaſt ten years ſince; I am to ſee a certificate."

Conway made no anſwer, but paced the room in diſtreſs viſible to Fitz-Piers. "I wiſh to hear what you have to ſay to me?" ſaid he afrer ſome pauſe, I muſt be gone from hence as ſoon as I have executed your buſineſs with my couſin. You are the laſt perſon in this world who had it in their power to oblige me:—You are the laſt perſon to whom *I* can be of any ſervice—Name it to me, and the more hazardous the better."

"It is not ſo important as you ſeem to fancy," ſaid Fitz-Piers, feeling ſome repugnance, from Conway's ſtrange manner, to diſturbing him with any more details of Carloville's villainy: as he began to apprehend, that, from an enthuſiaſm of character, and the ſtrong indignation he ſeemed to feel againſt oppreſſion, he might be wrought up to a pitch of violence and fury extremely inimical to his plan, and injurious to himſelf.

"No matter, ſir!" ſaid Conway quickly returning to his ſeat:—"I demand it of you as a debt: I inſiſt upon being employed by you.—When I leave this country, not a man living ſhall juſtly reproach my memory with an obligation unreturned."

"And

"And I," ſaid Fitz-Piers, "willingly acknowledge I am not of ſo tenacious a ſpirit: the weight of an obligation is not ſo irkſome to me. I ſhould already feel overloaded. Even this, ſir, that you rather ungraciouſly inſiſt on conferring, will be placed amongſt thoſe I cannot repay."—There was ſomething ironical in the manner of Fitz-Piers, which fortunately eſcaped Conway: he, aſhamed of his violence, felt reproved by the apparent calmneſs of it, and apologized for himſelf by declaring his mind was not at eaſe.

Fitz-Piers too was vexed at himſelf, and pitied Conway, whoſe inexplicability ſeemed to indicate that he was not an object of reſentment. He was ſorry to give him freſh cauſe of agitation in the ricital he had to make: not that he knew of any particular intereſt he took in thoſe perſons whom Carloville had particularly injured, but that he was animated by that rare and obſolete quixotiſm that excites ſome perſons to take up arms furiouſly in the cauſe of the oppreſſed. Conway's looks were full of defiance, rage, and impatience—whilſt Fitz-Piers arranged the papers and letters—"Theſe will explain to you, more circumſtantially and clearly than I can, events which are neceſſary to be known to Lord Trecaſtle, before he intereſts himſelf in my concerns."

"But have I time to go through them now?" aſked Conway.

"I wiſh firſt to remove my ſiſter from Strathener; ſhe is there, unknown to the family. I left her much againſt my wiſhes; but, fearful of expoſing her to Carloville's diſſolute tribe of aſſociates, ſtill as I thought in the Caſtle, it ſeemed to me preferable."

"Your

"Your ſiſter, then, is the lady——, whom we met with ſo wonderfully, and whom I have neither ſeen nor heard of for many years. I had long ceaſed to remember her but with abhorrence: I hoped and believed her dead. This deteſted Carloville, brought up with her from her infancy, prevailed on her privately to marry him. His father's diſapprobation, as he told her, rendered ſecrecy neceſſary; and the very reaſon that ought to have been an impaſſable barrier to her conſent, as a dependent on her uncle, was ſo often urged, that, young and unguided as ſhe was, and prepoſſeſſed in his favour, ſhe conſented, with reluctance and almoſt inſurmountable dread of Lord Carloville's laſting diſpleaſure, to ſubmit to a private marriage. Carloville and I were at college together. His father took equal care of my education as of my couſin's. We were attached to each other from habit; at leaſt I am inclined to think Carloville's temper was ſubject to the ſtronger ties. His gaiety and conviviality had gained him many intimate friends as he called them, particularly Morgan—he was not at college with us, and where Carloville picked him up I could never tell. Be it as it will, I took an inſurmountable averſion to him, from having heard things of him, that, in my opinion, marked him as unfit company for gentlemen; and without any provocation (for we had never met), I uſed, when I ſaw him with my couſin, to treat him with rudeneſs, by paſſing them both without notice. Carloville went ſo far as to invite this man to Belhaven, where, at Lord Carloville's deſire, I always accompanied my couſin. I petulantly, and perhaps inſolently, refuſed to be of the party, and immediately

immediately went to London, to amuſe myſelf with thoſe whom I fancied better ſuited to be my companions, known, as I ſaid, to be men of honour.

"We parted in anger, and my couſin and his favourite went to Ireland—I to London, where I thought no more of them, or of my reſentment. Term was ſoon to begin, when I received a letter from my ſiſter. It was about nothing; but yet a tone of uneaſineſs and anxiety ſeemed to go through it, ſo that, contrary to my uſual cuſtom, I read it more than once. I knew that Ellen loved me, and reproached myſelf as the cauſe of her diſquiet: either ſhe wiſhed to ſee me, or ſhe had diſcovered ſomething diſpleaſing to my uncle in my abſenting myſelf. I loſt no time in reaching Belhaven. The wind was particularly favourable—nevertheleſs it was night when I reached the Caſtle. My uncle was in the gout; my ſiſter too was unwell—ſhe had kept her room the preceding day, and could not be diſturbed; Frederic and Will Carloville were at the ſeat of Sir Dennis Caſtlebar, a few miles from Belhaven; Morgan, whom I deſcribed, had not been there at all. I felt uneaſy and vexed, and, without another queſtion, went to bed.

"It was, as I imagined, very ſoon after I had fallen aſleep, that I was diſturbed by hollooing and hunting-horns. My couſins were under my window, inviting me to join their party; for they had heard of my arrival, from the huntſman whom they had appointed to meet them with dogs on their return from their viſit. I was not diſpoſed to exerciſe; but Frederic ſeemed ſo entirely to have forgotten our mutual reſentment, by the gay and jocund manner in which he tempted me, I was per-

ſuaded to join in the hunt. But the morning was unfavourable, and, after an hour, or two, we agreed to return to Belhaven. My uncle, when his health would not permit us to meet below, generally invited Ellen to make his breakfaſt for him in a room adjoining his own, and always ſeemed to take particular pleaſure in her company. Impatient as I was to ſee her, having heard ſhe was not well, I would not have her diſturbed till Lord Carloville's hour, which was later than ours. I waited till near the middle of the day, when a ſervant came to enquire of us for Miſs Fitz-Piers? My uncle had been waiting an hour for her.

"I cannot expreſs to you my aſtoniſhment: there was ſomething foreboding in it!—I went to Lord Carloville: he took but little notice of me; but aſked peeviſhly, 'Why I had been ſo inconſiderate as to take my ſiſter out in ſuch a morning?'—I denied having ſeen her. 'Who then had?' was the inſtant queſtion. It is impoſſible to deſcribe to you the confuſion of the houſe. Carloville, if poſſible, was more frantic than myſelf. I recollected my ſiſter's letter, and, like a mad man, accuſed my uncle of having driven her from his houſe by unkindneſs. Heaven knows with how little foundation and how bitterly I have regretted ſuch black ingratitude! I ſhall never forget his countenance at the charge! He roſe with alacrity, and, holding up his hand, ſwore ſolemnly never to forgive that perſon, if any ſuch there were, who had occaſioned her flight. 'No, not my neareſt in blood! I would cut him off from his inheritance, and even blot out his name from my memory!' he exclaimed. When I think of it, and of his paſſion, I am

ſurpriſed

ſurpriſed he did not join me in the malediction: indeed he refuſed to ſee me for many days after this melancholy one—not from reſentment.

"I cannot give you any idea of the grief expreſſed by each of the Carlovilles. All our ſearches—all our enquiries were vain; and I believe from the time of her leaving Belhaven till our laſt meeting, have elapſed, within a month or two, eight years."

Conway had liſtened with deep attention, till at a pauſe in his narrative, he exclaimed, "Artful, hypocritical villain!"

"He was indeed the moſt conſummate!—We left Belhaven together; and I have now told you all I know from my own obſervation and perſonal concern in this terrible and diſtracting loſs. Lord Carloville I know never recovered it. I fear I have been leſs clear than prolix in my detail: I muſt refer you to theſe papers for any obſcurity; they are written by my ſiſter, and contain every elucidation."

"Let me hear the whole narrative from you, if you know more of it!" ſaid Conway—"I cannot collect my thoughts to read theſe papers with the attention they demand."

"All that remains I have from my ſiſter's written account. I could not urge her to ſpeak on the ſubject. She gave me theſe papers, written, as ſhe ſaid, to explain, and, if poſſible, extenuate ſome parts of her conduct, that had deſervedly occaſioned the ſevereſt cenſure. I find by theſe papers, ſhe had been three months married to Carloville: that on the evening preceding that on which I returned, they had had a long converſation, in which he told her he no longer entertained the ſlighteſt hopes of pardon from his father ſhould he avow their marriage; as he had declared,

in the moſt decided terms, that both Ellen and her brother ſhould, as well as his ſon, be eternally diſmiſſed from his favour and protection. But the evil was now irremediable. In tears and diſtraction this unfortunate girl deplored the ruin ſhe had brought upon all whom ſhe moſt loved. She propoſed retiring to the houſe of her uncle Fitz-Piers, not doubting but that benevolent and forgiving man would receive and comfort her. Though this was the point to which Carloville's falſe accounts tended, yet he did not chooſe ſhe ſhould retire to her uncle. After a variety of reaſons to convince her how prejudicial this ſtep would be to all our intereſts, he prevailed on her to leave all her friends in ignorance of her fate; aſſuring her, that his father would miſs her ſociety too much not to wiſh her return at any rate, and would ſubmit to *his* terms to procure it, when he ſhould make it appear, that, to avoid his diſpleaſure, ſhe had left him. Theſe arguments were but too powerful. She came to England, under the protection of Morgan, who had married them: ſhe lived for ſome time in the neighbourhood of London. Carloville, though not very frequently, uſed to viſit her from Oxford; till, tired of the expence, which his numerous diſſipations rendered inconvenient to him, he abruptly told her ſhe was not his wife; *that he had ſince diſcovered*, Morgan was not in orders when he married them!"

"*Not* in orders when he married them! Execrable villain!" reiterated Conway—"Oh Fitz-Piers, if you knew the emotions of my heart, whilſt you have been ſpeaking!—And he was really *not* in orders when he married them?—Then your ſiſter never was his wife!"

"Have

"Have patience, Conway!—I am distressed to see you so agitated!"

"This is calmness to what I feel!—But go on: I promise to give you no more interruption."

"Carloville offered to take care of his boy, if she would part with him; because he said, as a single woman, she would find less difficulty in disposing of herself, than encumbered with a child. He told her he had highly offended his father on her account, that his income was retrenched, and he found it necessary to go into the army, and leave his native country with a regiment then recruiting for the West Indies, and that he was no longer able to support her as he had done.—My miserable sister," continued Fitz-Piers, "in all the agony she endured, insisted on keeping her child: she represented to Carloville that nothing could be so unjust as to suppose any stigma would attach to them from the villany of that wretch Morgan—for, unsuspecting as she was, her heart could not accuse Carloville of this horrible fraud. The distress of her mind however brought on a fever; she lay many weeks insensible:—on the return of her intellects she asked for her child, and was told he had been taken by his father's orders out of the house to avoid the fever, which they told her was contagious. A dread of imposition, and an involuntary want of confidence such conduct imperceptibly occasions, began to make her suspect Carloville of the vilest schemes. Distraction again took possession of her mind: he often called to enquire for her, and once saw her in her delirium. A long time her mind continued unsettled and wavering; she had forgotten her child, and, at Carloville's

deſire, was removed to another lodging for change of air: all her expences were defrayed by him, and, to preſerve her life, he ſeemed to ſpare nothing. When ſhe was ſufficiently recovered to know him, as ſhe did to the aſtoniſhment of all around her, ſhe entreated to ſee her infant—He ſcrupled not to conſent immediately, and, weak as ſhe was, ſhe had no fear of undertaking a long journey once more to have that delight. Carloville accompanied her to the neighbourhood of Briſtol, where he had placed the child with a cottager, who, as far as ſhe was able, diſcharged the truſt with care.

" From that time Carloville took his leave, perhaps ſmitten with regret at having drawn this young and unſuſpecting creature into circumſtances ſo cruel: for he continued to write to her plauſible letters, full of promiſes and aſſurances that whenever it ſhould be in his power he would renew his engagements with her, provided ſhe ſtill concealed herſelf from her family; artfully intimating that his father particularly muſt remain in ignorance, as his prejudices againſt them were ſtill ſo violent that any account of their connexion coming to his ears might be of laſting diſadvantage to their child. Young, and not much inſtructed in uſeful things, the obſcurity of theſe letters was calculated to keep her in perplexity, and to reſtrain her, from the fear of injuring her child's intereſts, from making her deplorable ſituation known.

" But what was her horror, her deſpair, and ſufferings, when the news of Carloville's ſecond marriage with Miſs L'Eſterling reached her, as it did ſoon after it had taken place!—Sometimes ſhe would doubt the whole as impoſ-

ſible;

ſible; ſometimes recollecting her own unhappy caſe, ſhe would believe, this lady, like herſelf, had been impoſed on by vile and fictitious characters. But—no, it could not be! This lady was ſurrounded by her family, rich, and in the protection of her father! *Her* marriage too, was public. Often ſhe reſolved to write to Miſs L'Eſterling; but how ſupport her claims, or prove the truth of her ſad ſtory? She might be treated as an impoſtor, and her child would be deprived of bread: this conſideration alone was ſufficient to ſecure her ſilence. Some ſcanty remittances for a very ſhort time after this marriage were the laſt tokens of remembrance ſhe received from Carloville, and theſe accompanied by an act of barbarity that made her remember them with abhorrence. She kept no ſervant, and was always obliged to go herſelf for the letters when ſhe expected any at the poſt-office: unable to carry her child, ſhe uſed to entruſt him to the care of her neighbour, the woman, who had nurſed him. Not a ſingle line accompanied the bills encloſed. With an already aching heart ſhe returned to her cottage:—her poor neighbour met her at the door of it; upon aſking for the child, ſhe learned that a perſon had come to her not a quarter of an hour after her departure, and, calling the child by his name, and careſſing him, had told the woman, 'his mother had met him on his way to her houſe—that he was to overtake her on the road with the child, as ſhe did not mean to return tha night.'—'He gave me money,' added the wo man, 'and this letter—' The miſerable mothe tore it apart in agony: 'His father has ſen for him,—he will be taken care of!' was al it contained.

" She tells me," continued Fitz-Piers, " ſhe bore this greateſt of her misfortunes with more outward calmneſs than any of her former ones; inſomuch that the woman, who loved the child, ſaid to her reproachfully, ' ſhe did not think ſhe could have parted with him ſo eaſily'—Even this, unmerited as it was, had no power to move her, ' His father would take care of him, and ſhe ſhould die!'—But you have more feeling than to hear this ſtory with indifference," ſaid Fitz-Piers addreſſing Conway; " and I confeſs I had rather not go on—But I would not have you read the papers; they are a thouſand times more affecting."

" Tell me how I can ſerve you!" ſaid Conway with warmth; " I anſwer for Caerleon, my father, our whole family: tell me ſpeedily *what* I am to do, that I may do it!"

" I will not deter you from other concerns, Conway; but when you have an opportunity, lay all the circumſtances of this affair before your couſin."

" Do not reproach me by naming other concerns; this is one to which I could devote my life!"

" All I fear," continued Fitz-Piers, " is leſt William Carloville ſhould endeavour to ſet aſide any claims I may have it in my power to make for my ſiſter's boy. This is merely ſuppoſing the worſt, for I have no right to think ill of him—In that caſe he may be troubleſome, though I believe not materially ſo. From ſome recent circumſtances I think any remonſtrances your family would condeſcend to make, cannot fail of meeting with due conſideration from that of Carloville. Do you think it probable the Harwoods will offer any oppoſition? They are liberal and noble minded,

minded, and, as their ſiſter's intereſts can no longer interfere, I ſhould hope, from what I know of their general character, they had too much generoſity to burthen the oppreſſed by obſtacles of their raiſing."

"You cannot praiſe them too much in my hearing: Harwood will act up to every expectation the nobleſt mind can form of him, and ſo will Ethelreda."

"And *ſo would Ethelreda!*" repeated Fitz-Piers; "but ſhe is ſpared, and beyond the reach of malice or misfortune, of mortification or diſgrace!"

"Explain what you mean by diſgrace?" ſomewhat roughly aſked Conway.

"Why, as Morgan will ſwear to the legality of my ſiſter's marriage, and to his own previous ordination, provided I can indemnify him againſt the rage of the Harwoods, for having tacitly been acceſſary to the impoſition practiſed on their ſiſter. If not, he will abſcond as he threatens, and I ſhall loſe my only witneſs; for, like a fool, I have been dealing with him upon honour, inſtead of conſigning him to a conſtable."

"Morgan will ſwear to the legality of the marriage?—Then I anſwer for the Harwoods?" cried Conway—"Morgan, curſed raſcal as he is, ſhall have old Lewis's living!—But, no, it will be better to pay him the worth of it. I never deſire to look at a raſcal. Fitz-Piers!" ſaid he, recollecting himſelf with a ſigh, "this will go well with you all but me, I fear!—Get Morgan's atteſtation as ſtrongly drawn up as you can: you may venture to promiſe him any indemnity—I take that upon myſelf. It will be the firſt time, and I hope

the laſt, we have to compound felony—yet what would I not do to ſerve her?"

"Who?" aſked Fitz-Piers with emphaſis.

"One, whom, if it ſhould be in my power ——Get the certificate to-night. I ſhall go early to Strathener."

"To-night! it is impoſſible!—But call upon me when you want a teſtimony in your own favour: I am jealous leſt any other man ſhould be the panegyriſt of your warmth in the cauſe of the injured—Your kindneſs, your feelings, your unwearied exertions, your paſſion for juſtice——!"

"Could you ſee my heart, how all theſe magnified virtues would ſhrink to a point—to nothing to ſelfiſhneſs!"

"Diſguiſe them as you pleaſe, aſſign all the motives you can ſuggeſt, genuine feelings can loſe nothing of their character." To Conway in the preſent ſtate of his mind there was nothing oppreſſive in theſe praiſes; he heard them with ſatisfaction, becauſe every thing that could raiſe him in his own eſtimation ſeemed to place him nearer Ethelreda. They continued to talk over their plans till morning; all that he heard ſeemed to Conway like a pleaſing dream, from which he cared not to awake by leaving his companion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Se parent qui voudra du nom de ſes ayeux,
Moi je ne veux porter que moi-même en tous lieux;
Je ne veux rien devoir à ceux qui m'ont fait naître,
Et ſuis aſſez connu, ſans les faire connoître.

P. CORNEILLE.

OF all the newly-arrived perſonages at Strathener, it may be ſuppoſed Mrs. Harwood moſt ardently longed for the morning. By the advice of Dr. Felton, a preparatory note from her to her ſiſter was intended to take from the ſurpriſe; it was no ſooner delivered, than a ſingle line, written with a pencil in Ethelreda's hand, expreſſed the impatience ſhe ſhared with her ſiſter, once more to ſee her, and hear the ſound of her voice.

But how different in appearance were the emotions of each!—Mrs. Harwood all tears: Ethelreda all joy and rapture. To be reſtored to her friends, to her home, and no longer cut off from ſociety and light, no longer a breathing body amongſt the dead! ſhe ſeemed to feel a new exiſtence; that ſiſter whom ſhe thought ſhe parted with for ever, now in high health, and apparently reſerved for many years of happineſs, ſurrounded by a numerous family. Not ſo Mrs. Harwood:—ſhe had quitted her native country, with perhaps not very lively hopes of returning to it; but ſhe had ſeen her ſiſter as blooming and lively, as youth and health and an

an undiſturbed mind could make her—freed, as ſhe ſuppoſed, from all her fears of her huſband's return by the certainty of his death, and not ſubject to a remaining care—admired, almoſt adored, for her ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, her charity, her benevolence, and placing her whole delight in the exerciſe of her virtues—her time employed in elsgant or uſeful occupations, and apparently ſatisfied and content, ſhe ſeemed to have enſured to herſelf a life of calm and undiſturbed happineſs.

But her youth, her health, and even her beauty is diminiſhed: ſhe is grown old in appearance, though but few years have been added to her number; her proſpects are changed—her views are darkened—and the whole ſcene of her future life becomes a ſeries of dread, anxiety, and diſappointment. The contraſt was too much for the tenderneſs of Mrs. Harwood to ſupport; and in return for Ethelreda's faint ſmiles, ſhe could only give tears and expreſſions of ſorrow.

All the gueſts met at breakfaſt, Ethelreda and her ſiſter excepted. Mrs. Harwood's apologies were readily admitted; the more ſo as they were accompanied by a meſſage from Ethelreda to Lady Trecaſtle, intimating her intention of paying her a viſit in the morning, as ſhe was ſufficiently recovered to leave her room, and to think of taking leave of thoſe friends to whoſe kindneſs ſhe had been ſo much indebted.

This meſſage in ſome particular or other was pleaſing to the whole party; the ladies who had ſeen her before wiſhed to know if ſhe was much altered—eſpecially Lady Octavia, whoſe aſtoniſhment at hearing ſhe was alive and at Strathener is not eaſily deſcribed. Lord Trecaſtle

caſtle rejoiced in her recovery—Mr. Conway inwardly in the proſpect of her ſpeedy removal —and Mr. Carloville, in having at laſt an opportunity of judging of the perfections of ſo celebrated and ſo unfortunate a young woman, though he was aſhamed of the name by which he muſt introduce himſelf to her knowledge.

Lord Trecaſtle had employed himſelf part of the night in examining Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling's pocket-book; it contained letters from Carloville, which left no doubt of her perfect co-incidence in all his propoſals; amongſt the reſt, the forged account of Ethelreda's death and the ring, by means of which he had aided his ſchemes againſt the honour of Sir Francis L'Eſterling and his family. Theſe he communicated to Harwood and Mr. Carloville by which he explained to the former in what manner the reports of his ſiſter's death had been propagated and gained credit. Theſe, as they brought conviction of his villainy, and the length he ſcrupled not to go, were highly diſtreſſing to each of them. Indeed Harwood found ſome ſecurity for Ethelreda from her perſecutor, in the violent death of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, or his fears for her repoſe and ſafety would have been greater than ever; ſince ſhe was now in reality the heireſs of property, conjointly with her ſiſter, to the amount of ten thouſand pounds a year—a ſufficient inducement with him to renew his attempts at getting her into his power. Theſe conſiderations were not calculated to raiſe their ſpirits, ſo that they did not add to the entertainment of the ladies at breakfaſt—and except a few obſervations excited by Ethelreda's meſſage, and Conway's abſence, which was noticed by Mr. Harwood, to the great indignation of Lady Octavia, who wondered

wondered it was no better underſtood he was not to be named before her, the converſation languiſhed, and ſuffered long intervals, filled up by gloomy or ſuſpicious countenances.

In one of theſe moments of taciturnity, a gentleman was announced by the name of Pernell. He took his ſeat near the door, and, except to Mr. Conway, appeared to be perfectly unknown. Lord Trecaſtle was not then in the room, having left it to fetch a packet which came by expreſs to his uncle with one to him the preceding evening: in his confuſion he had not opened it, and, from the ſame cauſe, had detained his uncle's in his poſſeſſion. Mr. Conway could not conceal the pleaſure even the outſide of this packet gave him—he contemplated its ſize, and put it into his pocket unopened.

Mr. Pernell was the late Earl's attorney. He took an opportunity, having continued ſtanding whilſt Lord Trecaſtle and his uncle were engaged, to let the former know he waited according to his orders.

"Oh, Mr. Pernell, I beg your pardon!—You are now at leiſure to read the will?"

"Quite, my Lord—if your Lordſhip is not too much engaged."

"By no means; the time is of my own appointing. We are all here, I believe? No—where is Harry Conway?"

"Pray, Mr. Pernell, read the will!" cried Lady Octavia—"I ſee no neceſſity for any more hearers."

Mr. Harwood and Mr. Carloville of courſe attempted to leave the room as ſoon as the will was mentioned; but were pointedly entreated to ſtay—there was ſome little debate upon it between them, the gentlemen complying with reluctance,

tance, when Conway and Fitz-Piers entered. The unexpected meeting of the latter with Mr. Carloville cauſed a new delay, eſpecially as, when he diſcovered the buſineſs they were going upon, he attempted to withdraw; to which Lord Trecaſtle again oppoſed his entreaties. "Well, now this perſon of ſo much conſequence is arrived, I ſuppoſe Mr. Pernell, may proceed," ſaid Octavia.

"I wiſh to have this matter conducted with decency, madam," ſaid her brother with much gravity.—"You will pleaſe to obſerve we have many witneſſes."—After a long pauſe—"Mr. Pernell ——"

Mr. Pernell began to read his parchments, page after page, full of the moſt tedious repetitions. Conway could not conceal his impatience, and an obſerver would have imagined he had been diſappointed of a legacy, whilſt in fact not one ſyllable did he hear or diſtinguiſh from another; and Lord Trecaſtle might have left him his whole eſtate for any thing he heard to the contrary.—Not ſo Octavia, ſhe was lending all her attention to diſcover whether ſhe was independent of her brother, or whether Lord Poynings delegated the ſame diſcretionory power to her brother with which her father by his will had been inveſted. After all the eſtates were diſpoſed of, and the late Lady Trecaſtle's jointure and large fortune, which came undivided to her ſon, the daughters were mentioned; by which it appeared this will had been made previouſly to the death of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, and immediately after Lady Mariamne's marriage. Still Lady Octavia was in ſuſpenſe about herſelf; ſhe could not comprehend whether ſhe was mentioned with or without reſtrictions, till ſhe heard her doom unequivocally pronounced

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in the ſentence—" Further I will and bequeath to my daughter Octavia Conway, upon the ſame conditions impoſed by her maternal uncle, Octavius de Eſſart, Lord Poynings, the ſum of five thouſand pounds, in addition to the ſum already bequeathed by the above mentioned, &c. &c.—and in caſe of my demiſe, I do empower my ſon Erneſt de Eſſart Conway, viſcount of Caerleon—" ' Do you think, ſir, I will ſubmit to theſe conditions?' cried Octavia, burſting with indignation—' I will make a chancery ſuit of it, and expoſe you to all England! The will is ſpurious, forged! My father was not in his ſenſes!' ſhe continued, raiſing her voice at every ſentence—' Five thouſand pounds! and that paltry ſum not in my own power!'

" It is indeed a moſt unequal diviſion," ſaid Mr. Conway in a tone that diſcovered his diſapprobation; " for, if I heard right, Lady Mariamne's name is very differently mentioned."

" But you cannot be ignorant, ſir, Lady Mariamne's whoſe portion, including what ſhe received at her marriage, only amounts to twenty thouſand pounds—whilſt her ſiſter, by the Poynings' legacy alone, is entitled to more than twice that ſum."—" Very excellently tied up for your uſe," added Octavia.

" Twenty thouſand you know you can diſpoſe of *as you pleaſe*. I own I think his Lordſhip would have ſhown his wiſdom, if you had been ſtill more dependent, conſidering the *wiſe* uſe you make of your money!"

" You, I ſuppoſe, could diſpoſe of it more *ſenſibly* at a certain houſe in the neighbourhood of St. James's, or perhaps you have already? —I think, Mr. Pernell, I have a plea—the law

law will ſecure my property by taking it out of the hands of a gameſter."

"I am ſhocked at your indiſcretion, Lady Octavia!" exclaimed Lady Trecaſtle, who looked vexed during this ſcene.

"Your Ladyſhip may account yourſelf fortunate if mine are the *only* ones you diſcover."

"I always was of opinion, and I am ſo ſtill," ſaid Mr. Conway, "that daughters ſhould be equally provided for by their father: my brother was certainly wrong to conſider the Poynings' legacy in his will more than if it had never been bequeathed to Lady Octavia."

"I am ſure my uncle's opinion would have great weight in a court," ſaid the ſilly young lady.

"The laws are very nice in theſe caſes: nevertheleſs there are many inſtances of wills ſet aſide when they have been conſidered unjuſt; and if my niece thinks of conteſting the will, I, as friend to both, would adviſe my nephew to add the unpaid moiety of Lady Mariamne's fortune to Lady Octavia's—it will be ſtill in the family."

"I begin to ſee, ſir," ſaid Trecaſtle, "that you and I never thought alike, and that we never ſhall. In the firſt place, I confeſs it would never have entered my head to appropriate any part of Sir Francis L'Eſterling's property to my own uſe."

"You only chooſe to make free with mine," ſaid his ſiſter.

"You, my Lord, ſpeak with ſo little preciſion, I am at a loſs for your meaning. Sir Francis, we all know, will never claim the legacy, or his lady: in that caſe, I believe, Mr. Pernell, it is a lapſe legacy; that is, it reverts to the

the heirs at law.—In a point of law it is *your place* to ſpeak."

"Why, ſir, I believe the ſtatute in that caſe made and provided ——"

"Never mind the ſtatute—but tell us whether it is or not," cried Octavia.

"Your ladyſhip muſt excuſe me, it is my way of ſpeaking:—a lady of your quality cannot be ſuppoſed to underſtand the laws of the realm, or to concern yourſelf about them. I know very well your Ladyſhip's time has not been ſpent in learning any thing of the kind; but my Lord, and the gentlemen, if they are of the houſe, muſt know, unleſs there is an act for it, I might as well not give my opinion at all."

"We have not paſſed any act *yet* about giving an opinion, Mr. Pernell!" ſaid Trecaſtle with a ſmile; "but I am ſure there is no ſtatute to prevent me from paying the heirs of the late Sir Francis L'Eſterling what I ſhall conſider as their right."

"My Lord, you call for my admiration at your noble way of thinking—at the ſame time I proteſt againſt your intention!" ſaid Mr. Harwood; "I know ſomething of the law, and I believe, Mr. Pernell, the bequeſt reverts to the heirs, executors, &c. &c. unleſs, ſir, as I was going to ſay, the will of the teſtament runs differently."

"That is underſtood."

"We ſhall ſee as we proceed to finiſh reading the will," added Mr. Pernell. By this time the legacies were mentioned: they were numerous. Mr. and Mrs. Conway and their ſon were each mentioned, and Sir Francis L'Eſterling; ſome diſtant relations of the late Lady Trecaſtle, Lady Caerleon, Lord Beralſton, &c.

and

and the ſervants of the houſehold. Mr. Pernell folded up the parchments, and the ſilence impoſed on the company was inſtantly at an end.

"I have been waiting with the utmoſt impatience to ſpeak to you," ſaid Conway to his couſin—"I thought theſe infernal parchments would never be finiſhed! Can you ſpare an hour now?"

"I have not quite finiſhed with Pernell."

"I tell you again, Conway, there is no occaſion for this violent haſte: perhaps I can ſettle my buſineſs with Will Carloville without troubling Lord Trecaſtle unneceſſarily," ſaid Fitz-Piers.

"You may command me in an hour's time, Fitz-Piers," ſaid Trecaſtle: "I have not finiſhed with Pernell."

"Now, Mr. Pernell," ſaid Octavia, coming up to him with the will in her hand, tell me *honeſtly* who dictated this will. Do not be afraid to ſpeak the truth; it will raiſe your character as an attorney with ſome, though perhaps not with all your clients."

"Your Ladyſhip, I can aſſure you, has no reaſon to think ill of me," ſaid Mr. Pernell with a half timid countenance: whatever doubts may ariſe with any of the parties concerned, I have nothing more to ſay; the will muſt be proved and regiſtered."

"I wiſh you would have done with your law, and anſwer my queſtion."

"I am afraid, my Lady, we ſhall never underſtand each other."

"If you have any thing to ſay to Mr. Pernell, ſend your attorney to talk to him, Lady Octavia!" ſaid Trecaſtle angrily—"I am tired

tired of hearing ſo much childiſh altercation from a woman of your age."

"Oh, ſir, I am privileged for many years!—You do not chooſe to allow me arrived at diſcretion till I am five and-twenty?"

"I am ſorry to tell you, I have too ſtrong proofs of the neceſſity of the reſtriction."

Octavia bluſhed deeply, and was ſilent.

The attorney had no ſooner taken his departure, than Conway once more called on Trecaſtle to give him an opportunity of diſcloſing the buſineſs of Fitz-Piers; when Mr. Conway with much formality deſired the previous attention of his nephew to ſome concerns of his own: "I make no apology to you Henry."

"Yet you detain me moſt unſeaſonably!" ſaid Conway with unreſtrained vexation.

"I ſhall make no preamble, my Lord; I think it needleſs. The packet I have juſt received from the hands of your Lordſhip is not unexpected. I ſuppoſe I have no occaſion to recapitulate my ſervices, in order to remind any one here preſent that I have deſerved well of my country. Let not any ſuppoſe I do not feel conſcious—I acknowledge I am proud to boaſt of having deſerved, merited, bought—I mean earned, theſe rewards, or rather, not rewards—rights; I wiſh to be clear, very explicit—Am I underſtood?"

"Not quite," ſaid Trecaſtle with an ironical ſmile.

"Perfectly, perfectly!" cried Conway: "Have you finiſhed, ſir?"

"I will explain myſelf as I go on," continued Mr. Conway.

"It matters not, I think, gentlemen, of what nature is the recompenſe—I have only to receive it with humility: if my country decree me

me a ſtatue, or a penſion, or my ſovereign decorate me with a title, am I to be taxed with vanity, avarice, or ambition?"

"Certainly not!" anſwered ſome of the gentlemen.

"I," ſaid Conway, "ſhall reſerve my opinion."

"It was my nephew's I particularly wiſhed to obtain," ſaid Mr. Conway; "and before theſe gentlemen, your notions I know are rather eccentric," he continued, addreſſing his ſon. "But be it underſtood that I have never held any conſultation, never given any hint, I mean that I have not the moſt diſtant idea of the nature of the recompenſe my long-tried ſervices have entitled me to receive."

"Indeed!" cried Trecaſtle, with a well counterfeited air of aſtoniſhment. Conway frowned, and bit his lip, and with an air of vexation ſaid, in an under voice, he would not ſtay to hear the concluſion; when his father pointedly deſired him to exert his patience till he had finiſhed his ſpeech. He reſumed: "My Lord Trecaſtle expreſſes his ſurpriſe that I ſhould be ignorant of the nature of the reward beſtowed on me by my country!—His Lordſhip himſelf cannot be ignorant, cannot ſuppoſe, that I ſhould preſume to dictate in ſuch circumſtances; it is therefore needleſs for me to diſclaim any motive which may be ſuppoſed to guide thoſe who ſolicit honours, who boldly name the recompenſe they expect, and inſolently refuſe all but the identical gratification on which they have placed their hopes. That I have obtained a title, I am diſpoſed to think; that I ſhall be accuſed of vanity, is the probable conſequences; but I only wiſh from my ſoul, that every man in the kingdom were

as

as unambitious, as diſintereſted, as moderate in his deſires, and as little elated with high expectations, as myſelf.—I do not expreſs myſelf, I fear, with ſufficient perſpicuity and accuracy," continued Mr. Conway to his auditors; "my expectations are by no means high ones, and I declare myſelf ſtill uncertain by what appellation I am to be diſtinguiſhed—known, in future." Mr. Conway concluded by taking his diſpatches out of his pocket and breaking the ſeals, whilſt Trecaſtle, haſtily ſearching amongſt ſome paper of his own, ſelected a gazette from them, and with a viſage highly exciting curioſity, by the ſtrange and ludicrous expreſſions it exhibited, continued, to ſurvey his uncle, who, glancing his eye over the paper, declared with ſome confuſion there was a miſtake, and he muſt delay any further communication.

It is very extraordinary," ſaid Trecaſtle, "that buſineſs of this conſequence ſhould be conducted with ſo little attention that any miſtake ſhould ariſe!—Let us look at the Gazette!"

"The Gazette may be equally inaccurate—nay, it muſt be!" ſaid Mr. Conway with ſtrong marks of vexation in his tone and manner.

Lord Trecaſtle read a ſentence to himſelf, and then repeated aloud, "Aberconway!"

"Pray let us hear, my Lord!" cried Mr. Conway, his countenance brightening all at once.

"That relates to me, I find," ſaid Trecaſtle with extreme coolneſs—"but this to you, as I imagine.—'The Hon. Meredith Conway to the title of Baron Orwyn of Orwyn, his heirs-male, &c. &c.—in right of his

his wife the Hon. Meleſine de Percy, only ſurviving iſſue and ſole heireſs of Lionel de Percy Baron Orwyn.—My Lord, I have the honour of being the firſt to felicitate you!"

"You may ſpare yourſelf that trouble, ſir!" cried Mr. Conway, expreſſing himſelf with difficulty—"You cannot ſuppoſe I will ever ſubmit to the mortification of wearing a title in right of my wife. Of that, ſir, you were well aware; and I look upon your congratulations, as they were intended, inſult and mockery. I ſhall reſent your conduct as long as I breathe; and I expect that each of my family will adopt my ſentiments, and that all communication between us is from this moment at an end. Gentlemen," ſaid he, addreſſing his aſtoniſhed auditors, "I diſclaim this ignominious title—and I wiſh to make it known, that to be addreſſed by it I ſhall conſider as a perſonal inſult and defiance; and you, Henry, muſt ſee it in the ſame light, if you value my favour preſent or future."

"Menaces of every deſcription are quite out of my way," ſaid Conway calmly; "and they never were worſe applied to me than in the preſent inſtance, ſince, if there be any thing I conſider with more than total indifference, it is this very title—and indeed moſt others. But I muſt proteſt againſt the injuſtice of breaking off all communication and friendſhip with my couſin, merely becauſe he inadvertently applied this reprobated title."

"And how often," cried Trecaſtle laughing, "have I patiently borne the title of reprobate from my uncle?"

"But you are now Earl of Aberconway!" continued Conway.

"Why,

"Why, yes, in my own defence: though I ſhould have been perfectly ſatisfied to have remained Trecaſtle, I could not tamely ſuffer myſelf to be ſupplanted; and yet I have taken no very vigorous ſteps in the affair. I cannot help thinking I am particularly obliged——"

"To no one!" haſtily interrupted Conway.

"Pray, ſir," ſaid Octavia to her uncle, "why do you put yourſelf in this violent paſſion? I am ſure, if your Lordſhip do not accept of your title, your ſpeech has been to very little purpoſe!"

"You will pleaſe to remember, Lady Octavia, you owe my commands ſome reſpect."

"I am ſure, if I were Mrs. Conway—Lady Orwyn I mean—I ſhould not give up ſo eaſily; and you may depend upon it, notwithſtanding all his pretended moderation, Captain Conway will take it as ſoon as you are dead, if you do not."

Mr. Conway's patience could ſcarcely endure this impertinence with tolerable decency, and it was with extreme difficulty he refrained from anſwering, and remained in the room.—"To be ſure," continued the provoking creature, "the Miniſter might as well have made you an Earl. The barony of Orwyn is a very old one, certainly: but then it is *but a* barony; and every one is fond of rank; and if you were an Earl, you might look forward to becoming a Marquis; and I know you would not be content till you became the firſt of your family!"

"My uncle then muſt look forward to a dukedom; for my Lord is, as I ſee by the Gazette, Marquis of Aberconway," ſaid the new Marchioneſs with ſome little exultation.

"Really

"Really!" ſaid Octavia, looking at her ſiſter as if ſhe already ſaw the additional pearls in her coronet.

"And the ſequeſtered eſtates—are they reſtored?" ſaid Mr. Conway, forcing himſelf to aſk the queſtion with an air of intereſt.

"I have reaſon to think they will be," ſaid Trecaſtle; "and that you, ſir, have equal claims to them all, Conway Caſtle excepted. I am ſure, my couſin," continued he, turning to Conway, "will not think me ſelfiſh or unreaſonable for wiſhing to maintain an excluſive right to that, as an inheritance, for which, however, I allow an equivalent; being, as I am, perſuaded that I have no right whatever to any of the property in ſequeſtration, but as an equal ſharer with the other deſcendants of the attainted Earl of Aberconway."

"I poſitively diſclaim all participation in the Aberconway property on my own account," cried Conway. "The aggrandizement of your name will bring additional claims with it, whilſt mine diminiſh; for I ſhall take but little pleaſure in being diſtinguiſhed for riches," he added with a ſigh. "Yet do not miſinterpret what I am ſaying: Titles, I repeat, cannot intereſt me—to me what would they be but conſpicuous diſhonour?"

Neither Lord Aberconway nor his uncle underſtood Conway entirely.

"You have ſome peculiar ways of thinking, Harry" ſaid the latter: "but I join you in the opinion that the Conway property muſt not be divided. His Lordſhip, with his uſual light eſtimation of expence, ſeems to think his preſent fortune ſufficient to maintain his new dignities; but I have too much reſpect for the

family honour to conſent to the alienation of any of the eſtates; and as my life henceforth will be a retired one, it will be in my power to make my ſon's fortune equal to Lady Octavia's, and, at the ſame time, continue to live in the ſtyle moſt agreeable to myſelf."

"I muſt entreat, ſir, that Lady Octavia's name may not be mentioned," ſaid Conway earneſtly; "it is equally diſagreeable to that lady."

"I ſhall beg a private converſation with Mr. Conway on that ſubject," ſaid Lord Aberconway.—"And now I am ready to attend to your buſineſs, and that of Mr. Fitz-Piers."

Fitz-Piers and Carloville had retired to the further end of the room during the latter part of this converſation. Fitz-Piers had taken the opportunity of laying the ſtory of the unfortunate Ellen before him, and of explaining the predicament in which ſhe ſtood as to the legitimacy of her child. He ſpeedily found, to his great ſatisfaction, that Carloville, though he loſt all chance of a title by this moſt unexpected claim, not only acquieſced with cheerfulneſs and entered into all his views with alacrity, but made every offer of ſervice and protection in his own name and that of his wife; expreſſing at the ſame time his great deſire that they ſhould both accompany him to town.

Harwood left the room as ſoon as the buſineſs, to which Mr. Conway had called the attention of all preſent, was concluded in a way ſo contrary to his expectations; judging wiſely enough that Mr. Conway had no further wiſh to detain any of them; and concluding the harmony of the family would not very ſpeedily be reſtored, after a circumſtance ſo likely

likely to affect its peace as that to which he had juſt been witneſs, he thought the moſt delicate mode of proceeding towards the feelings of Mr. Conway, would be for him and his family to take their leave, provided Ethelreda was able to begin the journey.

Fitz-Piers now informed Conway, Mr. Carloville and himſelf had ſettled their concerns without applying to Lord Aberconway; nor could he refrain from praiſing the juſtice of his couſin, in which Conway heartily joined him; but ſpeedily miſſing Harwood, and dreading leſt he ſhould be making preparations for his departure, he did not ſtay to hear their arrangements, which Fitz-Piers was preparing to tell him, but, haſtening towards the door, as precipitately he retreated to give entrance to Mr. and Mrs. Harwood with Ethelreda.

The ladies, who were whiſpering at the upper end of the room, advanced to meet her: Mr. Carloville and Mr. Conway ſtepped back a few paces; Aberconway looked agitated—Fitz-Piers pleaſed, reſpectful, but full of enquiry; and Conway moſt unceremoniouſly turned towards a window which ſeemed to engage all his attention, whilſt compliments and introductions occupied the ladies. To theſe Mrs. Harwood anſwered for her ſiſter, whoſe ſpirits were evidently too weak to bear the ſight of ſo many perſons, ſome of whom ſhe had known intimately—and others, though unknown to her before, occaſioning the moſt unpleaſant recollections.

Harwood, whoſe anxiety to get out of the way of the mortified Mr. Conway was not trifling, had urged Ethelreda to make this one effort, telling her it was neceſſary to ſee the family once before her departure, which he

had previouſly ſettled ſhould take place in the courſe of the morning; concluding at the ſame time it would be the moſt expedient to take a general leave on her's as well as on Conway's account, and that this interview would leave no opportunity for a more particular one. Harwood, not a little embarraſſed at the air of conſternation his preſence occaſioned the whole party, had ſome difficulty to interrupt the intervals of ſilence that took place after their entrance: for the languid countenance of Ethelreda pale and altered, her evident depreſſion of ſpirits, and almoſt total ſilence, ſeemed to attract the obſervation even of Mr. Conway, whilſt Trecaſtle could ſcarcely conceal the grief with which he ſaw her altered perſon, and recollected what muſt have been her ſufferings.

It was in anſwer to Mr. Conway's enquiries after her health that Conway firſt heard the ſound of her voice; and approaching her with abruptneſs and haſte, in a hurried manner repeated his father's queſtion, which ſhe anſwered in a voice ſtill leſs articulate.

"Change of air," ſaid Harwood ſeizing the opportunity, "is recommended to my ſiſter by Dr. Felton immediately, and ſhe has conſequently fixed on beginning her journey this day. We are unfortunate in being obliged to depart ſo ſuddenly; but the advice of a phyſician muſt take place even of our wiſhes."

It was impoſſible not to ſee through the formal and ſtudied air of this ſpeech, ſo unlike Harwood's uſual manner.—Lord Aberconway reproached him with ſo ſpeedily changing the intention he had been allowed to believe he entertained of making a longer ſtay; and applied firſt to Mrs. Harwood then to Lady Carloville, in order to prevail with them.

He

He was joined by his lady, whilſt Conway fixed his eyes on the ground, and preſerved his ſilence, though not his indifference; for it was evident to all preſent that he was not unintereſted in the ſucceſs of his couſin's pleading, eſpecially to Lady Octavia, who eyed him with looks of ſcorn and jealouſy, though ſhe was too much in fear of her brother's obſervation to direct any of theſe glances towards Ethelreda.

Harwood, in the mean time, with an air of gaiety talked to the men, gave them all invitations to Harwood-Hall, and, leaning on the back of his chair, only waited the ſignal of moving from the ladies, who, uninfluenced by the eloquent and almoſt pathetic entreaties of Aberconway, had taken their decided leave; and Ethelreda, led by him, had already reached the door, when Conway, rouſed from his ſtate of inaction, rapidly followed, and, ſeizing her hand, as inſtantly replaced her in the chair ſhe had quitted.—"I cannot—I will not ſuffer you to go!" cried Conway. "This ſir, is your daughter!" addreſſing his father —"Command her to ſtay! She is my wife, but ſhe diſowns me, flies from me—I will not maintain the cruel ſilence impoſed on me another moment: my claims ſhall be publicly made; I will prove them before every unprejudiced perſon, in ſpite of your ſtudied evaſions, and thoſe of your relations!"

"What ſtrange frantic behaviour is this, Conway?" exclaimed Harwood, obſerving the terrified countenance of Ethelreda.

"Barbarous and unmerited accuſation!" ſaid ſhe, caſting up her eyes with an expreſſion of mingled grief and confuſion, and turning away her face whilſt ſhe tried to diſengage her hands from thoſe of Conway,

"My dear Ethelreda! how have you offended Captain Conway?" aſked Mrs. Harwood, looking at him reproachfully.

"You are prediſpoſed to judge harſhly of me, and I am too conſcious of deſerving your worſt opinions—Yet," cried Conway, "diſtreſſing as your ſeverity is, I cannot be ſilent: I will not relinquiſh this hand without an effort; I will not loſe this laſt opportunity I may ever have of pleading my right at leaſt to being heard. If I acknowledge all the faults by which I have forfeited them, I will at leaſt repeat thoſe claims, and enjoy the wretched happineſs of boaſting they were once allowed! —But ſhould you, Ethelreda, have reminded me of my unworthineſs?—Forgive me this laſt reproach! I am too ſenſible of the diſtance between us."

"Your memory is too faithleſs to paſt events, ſir," ſaid Ethelreda, ſome faint colour riſing into her cheeks as ſhe ſpoke—"All that is paſt is forgotten, or I think that reproach would have been ſpared."

"You deſpiſe, you treat me with contempt and ſcorn—*with coldneſs!*"

"Conway!" cried Harwood interfering, "ſuffer the ladies to retire; you forget that one of them is quite an invalid, and that this violence may be highly injurious."

"Do not attempt to controul me!" cried Conway. "Have I not ſeen an inſtance of her perſeverance? Do I not know, if I loſe ſight of her this moment, it may be for ever? —Diſgrace and diſhonour are attached to my name.—But you Ethelreda, be prevailed on, in compaſſion, to ſacrifice your ſincerity—Tell me you do not deſpiſe me, tell me you pity my unfortunate raſhneſs, and it will be ſufficient

ſufficient for my repoſe. I will never trouble you with my complaints or importunities—I will promiſe any thing!"—Diſtreſſed as ſhe was by every circumſtance of this interview, Ethelreda could ſcarcely command her voice to utter a ſingle ſyllable in anſwer: the eyes of all were turned towards her, and, ſuffering as ſhe did from their obſervation, ſhe felt ſtill more acutely the ſufferings of Conway, than thoſe he had impoſed on her; the ſecret marriage, ſo long and ſo ſtudiouſly concealed, Conway's abrupt and violent declarations now rendered no longer a ſecret, but called on for her own ſake to make a full and explicit diſcloſure, ſhe continued ſilent from embarraſſment and confuſion, and almoſt fainting with the feelings ſhe tried to conceal.

"You will not even ſpeak!" ſaid Conway, turning away with a countenance of agony after a long pauſe.

"I muſt—after all *you* have ſaid, *I dare* not be ſilent. I make no ſacrifice of my ſincerity in ſaying I pity you—I know not what you mean by diſhonour—I hope none will attach to me in the opinion of any here preſent:—that we were nearly connected you yourſelf have diſcloſed, but that we are for ever ſeparated I here proclaim, and call upon you to acknowledge in the preſence of your family and mine!—I will not add to my own diſtreſs by prolonging this explanation, though, had it been leſs public, ſuch an appearance of conſideration for my feelings however it might have added to their acuteneſs, would have increaſed my eſteem." At the very moment that Ethelreda tried to ſhelter herſelf under aſſumed ſeverity, her heart was burſting with a variety of emotions almoſt too painful to be endured; and when Conway exclaimed, "Then I have loſt it for ever!" ſhe burſt into tears.

During this ſcene, ſo diſtreſſing even for the obſervers, Fitz-Piers had been particularly attentive: and, unable to gather what miſtaken ideas could now interfere to ſeparate them, knowing as he did that Conway was perfectly aware of the validity of his own marriage, from the certainty of Carloville's having previouſly taken place many years with his ſiſter, conſequently the only valid one, except his with Ethelreda L'Eſterling; and not knowing Conway's notions of his own unworthineſs on the one hand, and the belief of Ethelreda and her family on the other, that each was held by contrary ties—wiſhed to explain himſelf to Harwood (a taſk neceſſary to be performed) on the ſubject of the diſſolved intereſts of Carloville and his ſuppoſed wife. But how to effect this diſcloſure, poſitively neceſſary as it was, he knew not, eſpecially as ſome degree of embarraſſment he thought muſt attend it with reſpect to Harwood and his family, and perhaps to Conway, notwithſtanding the vehemence and earneſtneſs with which he now aſſerted his claims to the once ſuppoſed widow of Lord Carloville. But he had no acquaintance with the Harwoods, and but a late one with Conway; ſo that in ſome meaſure he ſtood excuſed for forming ſo timid a judgement. Little did he gueſs that Harwood would have paid half his fortune for the intelligence he retarded communicating, and have thought it cheaply purchaſed.

The confuſion that Ethelreda's tears occaſioned, and Conway's inconſiderate proteſtations, was not a little increaſed by the pretended hyſterics of Lady Octavia. As to Mr. Conway, his aſtoniſhment and perplexity ſeemed arrived at their higheſt pitch, as well as that of Lord Aberconway, who made no attempt

attempt to conceal the intereſt he took in Ethelreda's concern: the former, divided betwixt the daughter whom Conway had juſt preſented to him, and the lady he believed to be his ſon's wife, ſeemed ſuſpended in his judgment whether he was to acknowledge either; whilſt Harwood, not knowing how to put an end to this ſcene, left the room in a kind of agony, partly of diſtreſs and partly of rage againſt Conway, for his mad and unjuſtifiable behaviour. Fitz-Piers followed him, in order to tell him how far the proved claims of the real Lady Carloville ſet aſide the preſent apparent doubt that involved them all in perplexity with regard to Conway. Pitz-Piers, anxious to preface his detail with ſome kind of preparation which ill ſuited with the impatience of Harwood in the preſent irritation of his mind, no ſooner named Ethelreda, than he diſcovered, by the manner in which Carloville was mentioned by Harwood, that his intelligence would give the higheſt ſatisfaction—then laying aſide his reſerve, boldly and clearly related what he knew of the fraud practiſed againſt Miſs L'Eſterling, adding that the real Lady Carloville was alive and at Strathener.

In the firſt moments of his ſurpriſe, Harwood's emotions ſcarcely ſuffered him to expreſs himſelf intelligibly; one moment ſtorming and vowing vengeance againſt Carloville; the next, ſhaking Fitz-Piers violently by the hand, calling for proofs of the marriage, and threatening to hang Morgan in the ſame breath; and then, with the ſame inconſiderate wildneſs he had ſo profuſely blamed in Conway—"Go," cried he, "Mr. Fitz-Piers, and prevail on the lady to accompany you inſtantly! I will return and prepare them for her appearance."—Fitz-Piers would have expoſtulated;

but Harwood, not chooſing to deliberate upon what he looked upon as inevitable, would hear no reaſon, and immmediately returned to the room he had quitted. Mrs. Harwood was ſupporting her ſiſter, who ſeemed almoſt annihilated—Conway pacing about like a madman —Mr. Conway and Lady Aberconway trying to pacify Octavia, who choſe to be a principal perſon in this ſcene. Mr. Carloville had made his eſcape; and Lord Aberconway's diſtraction ſeemed little inferior to Conway's when Harwood returned.

"Prepare yourſelf for ſomething extraordinary, Sibilla!" cried he.

"What is to happen now?" exclaimed Mrs. Harwood, turning pale and trembling.

"Nothing alarming, nothing diſagreeable! —Be compoſed, Ethelreda! The *real* Lady Carloville releaſes you from ſo odious and hateful a bondage.—Had you not better retire with your ſiſter, Sibilla?" continued he, alarmed at the diſtreſſing countenance of Ethelreda.

"No!" cried Conway again interfering— "I cannot ſuffer her to go!"

"You ſeem to aſſume ſome very extraordinary power, ſir!" ſaid Mrs. Harwood with ſomething like courage—"In ſpite of all your explanations, I am ſtill at a loſs to underſtand you!"

Mr. Conway now approached, and addreſſing his ſon, tried to convince him of the impropriety of his behaviour, and of the violent effect it *naturally* had on Octavia, who ſcreamed raved, threw about the hartſhorn and water, and frightened Lady Aberconway with her violence.

At this moment appeared, with a timid and moſt reluctant countenance, the lately diſcovered

vered Ellen, accompanied by her uncle, her brother, and Mr. Carloville; and behind them all ſneaked Morgan!—The calm that inſtantly followed was not the leaſt ſurpriſing effect produced by their entrance. Ethelreda, in whoſe mind ſome faint idea of the truth had glanced from Harwood's laſt words, ſunk into a chair and looked every thing but alive. Harwood, ſhocked at himſelf, ſeemed almoſt annihilated; and Conway, who felt all the diſtreſs of Ethelreda's ſituation, no ſooner releaſed from one unworthy wretch than claimed by another, for in his own opinion his diſgrace, as he imagined, was an inſuperable bar to Ethelreda's eſteem), remained ſtupefied, abaſhed, and ſilent.

Now the whole weight of the explanation reſted on Fitz-Piers, who, before ſenſible of the awkwardneſs of making it, but for Harwood's impetuoſity, would have conducted it with more caution and delicacy. He ſtammered, heſitated, and ſcarcely knew how to proceed:—"Give me leave to introduce my ſiſter!" was all he uttered; and Ellen, equally ſhocked, tried to ſhelter herſelf from the enquiring eyes that ſurrounded her by retiring behind them. But Mr. Morgan, whoſe feelings, though ſomewhat different, were equally oppreſſive, though he was left to plead his own cauſe with the injured perſons; and, in agony of mind at the puniſhment that awaited him, he began to make a merit of his voluntary appearance—at the ſame time he pleaded the promiſes of Mr. Fitz-Piers for his ſecurity.

"You are Mr. Morgan, then?"—ſternly aſked Harwood; and you are acceſſary to the impoſition practiſed on the daughter of Sir Roger L'Eſterling by Lord Carloville?"

"No, upon my honour!"

"Upon

"Upon your *honour!*—How dare you deny it?"

"Mr. Fitz-Piers and Captain Conway are the only perſons who have any reaſon to proſecute me," continued Morgan trembling; "for though I had nothing to ſay to Lord Carloville's *ſecond* marriage, and did not even know it was to take place, I knew that ſecond marriage had not been a valid one—and conſequently, when Captain Conway married the ſuppoſed widow, that lady was not in fact the perſon he took her to be."

"Speak no farther than as you are queſtioned, ſir!" cried Conway vehemently.

"But as to the marriage of Miſs Fitz-Piers to the Hon. Frederic Carloville, what teſtimony can you bear?" aſked Mr. Carloville.

"The ſtrongeſt poſſible one—that of having married them, and of being regularly in orders."

"Do you remember the perſon of the lady?"

"Perfectly!—and unleſs I am much deceived, that is the lady!" ſaid Morgan, looking at Ellen, who was leaning on her uncle's arm—he ſeemingly loſt in contemplation, and perfectly abſtracted from all around him, though in reality wonder alone kept him ſilent.

"The ſubſequent engagement is then annulled?" aſked Harwood with much ſatisfaction.

"Entirely!" cried Morgan with alacrity, auguring well for himſelf from his manner.

"Unleſs," added Fitz-Piers, "you require ſtronger evidence?"

"Not I!—only warrant the truth of this!—I cannot truſt to that gentleman's *honour* with perfect ſecurity."

"I pledge myſelf ſo far!" ſaid Fitz-Piers.

"Then Mr. Morgan may retire," added Harwood.

"By

"By no means!" ſaid Ethelreda faintly—"I muſt aſk that gentleman one queſtion."

"What fatal queſtion is that?" cried Conway, ſpringing towards her—Oh, Ethelreda, what new torture have you in ſtore for me?—You are mine irrevocably—mine, diſgraced and unworthy as I am!—mine, and ſubject to no other claims!"

"Your paſſions," ſaid Ethelreda with aſſumed calmneſs, "make you overlook the moſt obvious and glaring truths—Did not Mr. Morgan this moment declare that I am not the perſon whom you married, but another? And is it not palpable to every one preſent, that a fictitious perſonage, and ſuch I was in every ſenſe, though innocently, is incapable of forming a binding engagement?"

"Oh, Ethelreda!—Reduced to ſubterfuges—to ſtratagem, in order to ſeparate herſelf from me for ever!—Becauſe in a moment of paſſion—of delirium—I forgot my honour and my duty, and ſacrificed all, even my country, to her, ſhe drives me from her for ever!"

"Inexplicable as you are, I cannot bear your reproaches, nor the ſuſpicions you caſt upon my ſincerity, as if it had not been ſufficiently tried!—Is it poſſible you can be ſo infatuated, ſo ſelf-deceived, as not to know that another engagement on your part takes place of that which you urge ſo ſtrongly between yourſelf and me—rendered void as it plainly appears?"—Ethelreda, exhauſted, could ſcarcely raiſe her voice ſo as to be heard diſtinctly.

"If that be the queſtion," ſaid Mr. Morgan, "the lady is, I believe, perfectly right: as, if ſhe chooſe to be releaſed from her marriage, ſhe certainly may—I ſhould ſuppoſe that to be indiſputable.—There are caſes, though rare——"

"Begone,

"Begone, ſir!" exclaimed Conway with deſperate violence—"Ethelreda, do you mean to infer that I am married to Octavia, or do you only give credit to the fooliſh opinions of this man in order to eſcape from me?—Anſwer me unequivocally!"

"Let me leave you; I have no longer any thing to ſay—except that I wiſh you all happineſs and tranquility!" ſhe added, in an inarticulate tone.

"*Happineſs and tranquility!* We do not part ſo eaſily, madam," ſaid Conway in the moſt recriminating accent. "A legal proceſs ſhall determine between us—not the opinion of ſuch a man as this, to which you ſeem inclined to truſt ſo implicitly."

"Conway!" cried Mr. Conway advancing—"I am diſgraced by your conduct and behaviour.—You ſee with how much diſguſt this lady's delicacy ſhrinks from your unjuſtifiable violence and abſurd claims:—ſhe has clearly proved their inſufficiency, and, by her candid, generous, and delicate way of thinking, has ſhown that in chooſing her you did honour to your own judgment and taſte: but circumſtances are deciſively againſt you, and you have only to ſubmit with patience, and ſhew yourſelf not altogether debaſed and degenerate by giving way to violence and unmanly regret."

"What! even you, ſir, can bear teſtimony to her merit, yet urge me to give her up?—Never, Never, whilſt I breathe!"

"Do you forget Lady Octavia?"

"Oh that I could forget my own exiſtence!—Yet what is Octavia to me?—Ethelreda, I will combat your objections no longer; but I will remove far from every object that can remind me of happineſs or miſery.—You, Ethelreda, do not know how much I am fallen even in my own eſteem—Shall I tell you that coward

coward and deſerter are names attached to mine?—Will you think of me with abhorrence or pity? will you pardon me for all that you have ſuffered? or will you drive from your remembrance with diſguſt?"

"You wrong me as much by your queſtion, as you have already diſtreſſed me," ſaid Ethelreda contending with her emotion—"Sunk and degraded as *I* am, I yet feel ſome ſatisfaction in hearing the approbation ſo liberally beſtowed on my conduct by Mr. Conway.—You talk of diſgrace attached to your name. How then would you be able to ſupport that of your wife—deceived, without a name, in fact an impoſtor, though not in will?—Ought you not rather to rejoice that I have it in my power to ſeparate myſelf from you? for believe me, my proud and tenacious ſpirit would always have reproached me with fixing a burthen upon you, which under ſuch circumſtances as at preſent attend me, you might have rejected."

"Oh, never, never!—There can be no circumſtance—Put me to the proof!"

"It is impoſſible!" repeated Ethelreda—"and convinced as I certainly am, I cannot let you ſuppoſe that what you call your diſgrace would have ſwayed me: I know myſelf to be the cauſe of your quitting the ſervice; is it not to that raſh action you allude?—I ſhould have conſidered that diſgrace as much detached from you, as at this moment I feel it added to my own—and but for this ſeparation ——"

"Generous Ethelreda!" interrupted Conway, "you not only pardon—you try to reconcile me to myſelf; but whilſt you thus perſiſt in ſaying we are ſeparated, that is impoſſible; for if I leave you I ſhall again relapſe into all the phrenſy of deſpair!"—Conway ſtill held

Ethelreda's

Ethelreda's hand: Mrs. Harwood was in tears by her ſide.

"Sir," ſaid Morgan, addreſſing Mr. Conway, "I am fearful that the lady has miſunderſtood what I took the liberty to ſay—ſuppoſing her to be averſe to the marriage with Captain Conway—It was only a ſurmiſe of mine, that it might be ſet aſide—and I was going to mention a caſe——"

"Mention no caſe, ſir!" interrupted Conway; "I am fully convinced of all I have aſſerted."

"Is he not married to Lady Octavia?" ſaid Mr. Conway, not attending to his ſon.

"I certainly read the ceremony: but that is invalidated, if the parties concerned chooſe to abide by their firſt engagement, which the lady ſeems no longer inclined to ſet aſide."

"I am aſtoniſhed," ſaid Mr. Conway, "how this could have eſcaped us all ſo long."

"And ſo am I," exclaimed Harwood joyfully.

"You muſt not include me in the miſapprehenſion," ſaid Conway.—"And you, Ethelreda, cannot with honour retract a ſyllable of what you have ſo freely uttered?" he added with an anxious countenance.

"Do not ſuſpect me capable of it," ſaid Ethelreda—"I have no more proteſtations to make, and all the diſadvantages of my ſituation are fully known."

Lady Octavia, who now clearly perceived the cauſe was likely to go againſt her, thought it high time to change her hyſterics for the proper degree of ſcorn more becoming a lady in her ſituation.—"And ſo, Sir," ſhe exclaimed, addreſſing her uncle, "I am to thank you for all the inſolence I have been expoſed to during this moſt intolerable ſcene!—And my amiable brother

ther, too takes an affront with edifying meekneſs!"

"Take care, Lady Octavia, how you farther expoſe yourſelf!" ſaid Aberconway, turning ſudenly and facing her. "Learn a little prudence, if poſſible, from this leſſon; for which, I own, you have paid high. I ſuppoſe you can gueſs the purport of a letter I have juſt received, ſigned Philibert Clothaire d'Epernon, Comte de———"

"You may ſpare your advice, ſir!" cried ſhe, violently interrupting him—"I ſhall not ſtay to be inſulted." And with extreme haſte ſhe made her eſcape from the room without any attempts to prevent her, for even Mr. Conway gave up the long conteſted point—and after a few moments of confuſion, taking a letter from his pocket, and approaching Ethelreda—"Condeſcend, madam," ſaid he, "to prevail on my ſon to read this letter, and reconcile him to himſelf by informing him, that I have been more careful of his honour than he has: the renunciation of the ſervice, ſo bitterly regretted, I took meaſures for preventing; and his immediate illneſs, in ſome degree, inſured the ſucceſs of my plan. That letter is an anſwer to one I lately wrote, in order to procure him an appointment. I muſt congratulate myſelf on having reſerved the diſcovery till it could be confirmed, and receive double value coming from your lips."

Ethelreda tried to anſwer, and to expreſs the pleaſure ſhe received in the communication: then, ſilently putting the letter into Conway's hand, ſhe withdrew, overcome by a variety of emotions and ideas that crowded too faſt upon each other to allow of giving them utterance, even had ſhe been leſs exhauſted and fatigued with the exertions ſhe had already made. Mrs. Harwood

Harwood accompanied her ſiſter, impatient to be alone with her; for all that had paſſed ſeemed more a dream than a reality.

CHAP. XXXIV.

O mille volte fortunato, e mille
Chi ſa por meta a ſuoi penſieri in tanto
Che per vana ſperanza immoderata,
Di moderato ben, non perde il putto.

GUARINI.

CONWAY, though intoxicated with his own happineſs, which he now looked upon as certain, made but haſty acknowledgements to his father for having been ſo careful of his honour; but their ſincerity compenſated for their brevity even in the opinion of Mr. Conway, who, but for the ſevere blow his ambition had received, could eaſily have reconciled himſelf to the loſs of Octavia's fortune, for that which muſt now inevitably be the portion of Ethelreda. Five thouſand a year was clearly the more eligible of the two. But, alas! all thoſe ſchemes that had tempted him to lead a life of fatigue and occupation, to ſtifle all the genuine feelings of his heart, and to ſacrifice the confidence of his family, and the happineſs—almoſt the life of his only ſon, for the rights of another—all the vaſt fabric of grandeur had toppled to its baſe in a moment, and his vaulting ambition had been inſulted by a title in right of his wife!—This bitter diſappointment, the ſad reverſe of all his golden viſions, rankled at his heart, and made him, in its firſt poroxyſms, openly abjure the title, and ſecretly a public life; reſolved to retire from the ſcene of all his former occupations, and, in ſolitude, conceal the mortification that preyed on his mind.

What

What would have been his feelings had he known that to his ſon's caſual diſcovery of theſe ſchemes of aggrandizement he owed their ſubverſion?—Conway's ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice urged him, unknown to Caerleon, to make powerful intereſt in favour of the right, not always the ſtrongeſt claim:—nor did he conceal his name, leſt he ſhould be implied in his father's endeavours to ſuperſede the elder branch of his family; exhibiting perhaps the moſt ſtriking contraſt of character to that of his father that could have been oppoſed to it; and exciting equally the admiration of the generous and the ſelfiſh, the noble and baſe, the politician and the honeſt man.

Ethelreda was no ſooner releaſed from the painful obſervation of the Strathener family, and alone with her ſiſter, than, giving way to all the repreſſed feelings of her heart, ſhe tried to relieve herſelf from their oppreſſion by tears. It was long before ſhe could diſtinctly relate to Mrs. Harwood all that had happened ſince her departure, and her real ſituation with regard to Conway; and even now it appeared to her ſtill embarraſſed and doubtful. The uncertainty of Carloville's deſtiny ſeemed to hang a cloud over the future brightneſs of her fate, and damp the momentary pleaſure ſhe contemplated in the certainty of her releaſe from him.

It was not difficult either for Ethelreda or Mrs. Harwood to diſcover that to the death of Sir Francis L'Eſterling Conway owed his father's acquieſcence in this new connection; for Mr. Conway's avarice had ever been too thinly veiled not to be conſpicuous to the eyes of his acquaintance.

This diſcovery was by no means flattering to the pride of Ethelreda; who, conſcious that her

her fortune was the leaſt of her endowments, felt mortified that it was the only one of which her future father diſcovered the value. But different and more ſoothing were her reflections, when ſhe thought of Conway and his mother, and how fully all her qualifications had been by them appreciated, and even partially over-rated.

The projected journey to Harwood Hall raiſed freſh difficulties in the mind of Ethelreda. She was not unappriſed of Mrs. Conway's illneſs, and that to ſee her was almoſt impoſſible. By leaving Strathener, which ſhe was moſt anxious to do, ſhe knew ſhe ſhould be the means of ſeparating Conway from his family; for ſhe was too well acquainted with him to ſuppoſe that even her injunctions would not be of force ſufficient to prevent him from following her even into Weſtmoreland. In this opinion Mrs. Harwood concurred; but it was highly painful to both to remain gueſts at Strathener, where ſhe muſt conſtantly meet with the preſent Lady Carloville, to whom any ſuch meeting muſt be equally painful. And as for Lady Octavia, whenever the name croſſed her mind, its effect might be traced in the variations of her countenance—and even Conway ſhared in the cruel recollections and ſuſpicions it raiſeds.

It grew late in the day, however, and, as the dinner-hour approached, Ethelreda's wavering reſolutions were ſtrengthened, and ſhe became anxious to leave the Caſtle, conſcious ſhe ſhould be expected to make her appearance at dinner, where ſhe muſt meet Octavia and Mr. Conway. Harwood had been entirely occupied in a long conference with the new Marquis; ſo that when the firſt bell rang, he appeared for a moment to tell them they were

expected

expected in the drawing-room, and then made his escape to avoid the reproaches that were likely to follow in consequence of a delay that the ladies themselves had not projected; at least, so Harwood reasoned, and not without some truth. Distressed as Ethelreda was at the idea of again encountering this formidable set, it was now inevitable; and, collecting all her spirits and resolution, she determined, if possible, not to suffer herself to be depressed by the uneasy sensations she felt at the thoughts of being once more an object of curiosity and observation.

At dinner she placed herself between Fitz-Piers and Harwood; and, preferring the conversation of a stranger as least embarrassing, she particularly addressed herself to him, who, pleased and delighted, bestowed on her all his attention and respect. Conway, at a distance from them on the opposite side of the table, now and then ventured to look towards Ethelreda, half reproachfully for the studied manner in which she avoided meeting his eye. She felt a little relieved at hearing Lord Aberconway observe to his cousin, "Octavia is by this time almost at Bristol Wells!"—and at Conway's answer, "I have not seen a news-paper this week:—which plainly convinced Ethelreda, as well as all present, that Conway had noticed her absence, if indeed any beside herself suspected her of it. Lord Aberconway, with his usual vivacity, laughed, and made an observation on the attention the answer implied; and Ethelreda, for the first time looking towards Conway, discovered the dimple in her cheek which of late had been so rarely seen. The languor and silence of the party were beginning to give place to something like general conversation, as if Ethelreda's smile had

been

been the ſignal. Even Ellen could not ſee without admiration the beauty of her rival, when her animated countenance diſplayed all the graces of her mind, and gave a new charm to her converſation, which Fitz-Piers, who was an amateur, and turned on pictures; and, for the ſake of argument, was maintaining the ſuperiority of the Venetian againſt the Roman ſchool: nor did he ſeem more ſtruck with her perſon than delighted with the correctneſs of her taſte and the ſtrength of her judgement, as well as the politeneſs and apparent diffidence with which ſhe oppoſed his opinion.

Lord Aberconway and Harwood were arguing in a tone rather decided the more oppoſite ſubject of foreign and Engliſh cookery; for, whilſt the former was praiſing the ſuperior excellence of macaroni at Naples, Harwood was for ſending all their execrable olios pell mell to the devil, as not worth an argument; when Lord Aberconway once more broke the good order of the meeting, by addreſſing Ethelreda by the name of Carloville. The confuſion it occaſioned was now irretrievable, and the ſilence that enſued beyond the powers of converſation to interrupt. It had raiſed the very ſhade of Carloville to torment them all for the remainder of the day; and Lady Aberconway, fatigued with the dullneſs of her party, took the firſt opportunity of withdrawing with the ladies.

The gentlemen were no ſooner alone than Mr. Harwood mentioned his ſtill intended departure. Conway was ſilent; for, having had not a moment, anxiouſly as he deſired it, for converſing with Ethelreda, he dared not make any objection, leſt he ſhould be oppoſing a determination of hers. But it was with extreme pleaſure he heard Lord Aberconway propoſe Caſino Belvedere to him for an immediate reſidence,

ſidence, as it was quite fit for his reception.—"It will ſerve you," added he, "till the Caſtle is once more ready to receive you; for we ſhall make a point of keeping you in our neighbourhood, at leaſt part of the year."

"That is a point," ſaid Mr. Conway—or rather Lord Orwyn, "on which we muſt all try our influence, and I hope not without ſucceſs."

"I agree to it readily for my own part," ſaid Harwood, "provided none of my family is averſe to the Caſtle as a reſidence. But I ſhall not combat a ſingle objection, even where I have a right."

"You are quite right," cried Conway, gueſſing that Harwood's alluſions were meant as hints to him.

"Yet I know not any women leſs ſubject to whims and fantaſtical notions than thoſe with whom I am connected; and whenever they oppoſe me, I am certain of diſcovering that they are reaſonable, and that I am not."

Conway's aſſent to this truth, which ſeemed to touch him, was a ſilent one; whilſt Fitz-Piers ſeized the opportunity of beſtowing on Ethelreda's perſon and underſtanding the warmeſt and moſt emphatic admiration, in which he was echoed by Mr. Carloville; whilſt Conway, though he would have riſqued his life to maintain the truth of all they ſaid, could ſcarcely conceal his vexation that any man ſhould dare to admire her beſides himſelf—to the evident diverſion of Harwood.

It was, however, ſettled, that they ſhould go to St. Siffrid's immediately, provided no objection was made—and Harwood with great good humour gave Conway to underſtand, he would trouble him to propoſe it to the ladies, as a perſon of more influence. Conway inſtantly availed himſelf of the hint, and left them.

It was late before the gentlemen quitted the dining-room. Harwood walked up to Conway, who was ſitting on the ſame ſopha with Ethelreda, and aſked him the ſucceſs of his propoſal. Ethelreda coloured. Conway heſitated, and ſaid, "He had not yet made it." Harwood reproached him for being a worthleſs ambaſſador, who attended to none of his inſtructions. Mr. Conway, who caught the ſentence, deſired he might be recalled; and, taking his place next to Ethelreda, the plan of returning to the Caſtle was ſpeedily propoſed and acceded to; that is, it was referred to Mrs. Harwood, who acquieſced in it immediately. And now, for the firſt time, Ethelreda ſpoke of Llewellyn and Winifred, though ſhe had not ceaſed to think of them; and, addreſſing herſelf to Conway, ſhe enquired if he knew whether the old man and his wife were yet in the Caſtle? Conſcious as ſhe was they muſt be anxious for her, ſhe wiſhed to know whether they were informed ſhe was at Strathener?—In the warmth of Ethelreda's thanks, Conway received the reward of his benevolence towards the old couple, whom he had made it his buſineſs to find out, ſequeſtered as they were in the Tower, that they might partake of his joy in the reſtoration of their miſtreſs. And fortunate was it that he did not delay his kindneſs, as, from grief and terror and ſuperſtition joined, neither Llewellyn nor Winifred ſeemed to have many days to live when he renovated them by the intelligence of Ethelreda's recovery and ſafety.

Ethelreda repeated the detail of his kindneſs to Harwood and her ſiſter, with an exultation in her tone and manner, of which ſhe was not conſcious, though it was not loſt even upon Conway—and frequently interrupted herſelf to thank him with expreſſions of gratitude and obligation, with which he was too much delighted to anſwer reaſonable.

CHAP. XXXV.

While you have fed upon my ſeignories;
Diſpark'd my parks, and fell'd my foreſt-woods;
From mine own windows torn my houſehold-
coat,
Raz'd out my impreſs; leaving me no ſign
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To ſhew the world I am a gentleman.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON their way to St. Siffrid's, Ethelreda, but more eſpecially Mrs. Harwood, looked on each ſide the road for all the objects ſo well remembered. Every tree was too fondly impreſſed on her memory for her to fail noticing the havoc that had been made amongſt the fine wood of oaks that ſurrounded it, many of which lay proſtrate on the ſpot where they had been felled by Carloville's orders; an injuſtice that no other man would have dared to offer, or any other than Sir Francis L'Eſterling would have borne. The deſtruction of theſe oaks, as ſacred in the life of Sir Roger as the groves of the druids, ſhe ſaw affected Ethelreda; and they continued to lament them in ſilence till they arrived at the Caſtle, where they were met by Conway, who had preceded them with Harwood.

Llewellyn and Winifred! were almoſt the firſt words Ethelreda uttered at entering the Caſtle: nor was Mrs. Harwood leſs impatient to ſee them than her ſiſter. Poor Llewellyn, between joy and grief, could ſcarcely anſwer any of their af-

fectionate queſtions for contemplating the depredations that had been made on the inſide of the Caſtle; nor had they eſcaped Sir Roger's daughters.

The high antique chimney, covered with gilding, had given way to a modern one of white marble; the velvet and fringe, ſtripped from the walls, was ſucceeded by arabeſques in freſco, imitated from thoſe of the Vatican; the painted windows with their ſtone frames were departed, to make way for Venetian doors and plate glaſs: but Ethelreda's regret gave way to laughter, when ſhe ſaw the half-finiſhed colonnade with which the abſurd Sir Francis had begun to *patch* his Caſtle.

"Did you ever ſee a place ſo *ridiculouſly* ſpoiled?" ſaid Harwood. "This medley of Gothic, Saxon, and Grecian architecture ſurpaſſes any combinations of the kind that ever were blundered upon!—I proteſt I am aſhamed to live here!"

"I hope the outſide can be reſtored to its original ſtyle," ſaid Mrs. Harwood; "and as for the room itſelf, I confeſs it is much *lighter* than it was formerly."

"And I," ſaid Ethelreda, "cannot forget thoſe beautiful coloured rays that uſed to ſtream through the painted glaſs at ſunſet."

"All that you may have in perfection at Harwood Hall, beſides a charming caſcade exactly in view of it; and provided Captain Conway can obtain your permiſſion to be of the party, we need only ſtay here till you have determined what pariſh you will belong to."

Ethelreda made no anſwer. She knew it to be Harwood's opinion ſhe ought to be married again by *banns*, and as ſoon as poſſible; and notwithſtanding the misfortunes of her former marriage, and

and all the ſad omens that attended it in the church of St. Siffrid, ſhe ſtill preferred renewing her engagements with Conway there.

"You have then no objection to remaining a ſhort time at the Caſtle?" ſaid Conway fearfully.

"All my objections you have already heard," ſaid Ethelreda. "I entreat you for the laſt time to conſider them well, and at your leiſure: lay them before your family, and do not fail to recollect what I have often repeated to you," ſhe added in a low tone, "that two perſons, the one proud and tenacious, as I know myſelf to be, the other irritable and violent, bid fair to be miſerable."

Conway looked at her for a moment: "Are theſe your real ſentiments?"

"Certainly!" ſaid Ethelreda, half ſmiling at his gravity.

"Then you do not believe, in ſpite of all my proteſtations and aſſurances, that I have learned to reſtrain this unhappy violence of temper, and that I am determined to correct it?"

"Do you wiſh to perſuade me that you are capable of ſuch heroiſm?"

"I wiſh only to perſuade you that I am ſincere in what I promiſe!"

"How much ſafer not to promiſe at all!—or ſo conditionally as always to preſerve an *appearance at leaſt* of intending to perform them!

"If you had really a right to ſuſpect me, I could bear theſe reproaches more patiently."

"I ſhould rather think leſs ſo," ſaid Harwood approaching; "for patience is moſt commonly the characteriſtic of a perſon falſely accuſed. But obſerve, I do not pretend to be any judge of your diſpute, but only to put an end to it—Beſides, I am anxious to ſee what more is new to me."

"Amongſt which, my dreary but hoſpitable abode muſt not be forgotten," ſaid Ethelreda—"and I will be your guide."

"Not for the world!" cried Conway, recollecting the horrors he had ſuffered in traverſing the long winding paſſages.

"You are miſtaken if you ſuppoſe there will be any thing terrible to me in returning to look at my cell. It was my voluntary choice, and I think of the protection it afforded me with gratitude!" ſaid Ethelreda with animation.

"Spare yourſelf then the fatigue of going there to-day!" ſaid Conway, taking her hand with an entreating countenance, "and I will conduct Mrs. Harwood if ſhe perſiſt in her intention. The watch-tower, and all its avenues, will ever be too ſtrongly impreſſed on my memory to require any other guide!"

"And the way to the battlements thro' the little turret?"—Conway looked vexed and agitated at this laſt recollection; and Ethelreda left them to queſtion Llewellyn and Winifred, and could hear in return nothing but praiſes of Conway, for the care and attention which he had not ſpared, to relieve them from the terrible fears they ſuffered on her account, when they miſſed her from the watch-tower, and heard no tidings of her in the Caſtle, where Winifred was ſtared at by the people as if ſhe had riſen from the dead.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula, nec malis
Divulſus querimoniis,
Suprema citiùs ſolvet amor die.

HORAT.

THE marriage of Ethelreda was no longer delayed than till Conway's mother was ſufficiently recovered to join her family on the day of its celebration; when, if any inferior circumſtance could add to her felicity, it was the delight ſhe expreſſed in this unhoped accompliſhment of all her wiſhes for her ſon's happineſs: for who could doubt that the preference and ſeverely tried attachment of ſuch a woman were ſufficient to enſure it? Indeed Conway ſeemed fully to underſtand her value; and to feel with gratitude that a companion ſo rational, ſo ſweet-tempered, ſo accompliſhed, falls to the lot of few, even the moſt deſerving.

Nor was either ever diſappointed in the expectations they had formed of each other. A preference ſo founded could not diminiſh by time, nor a more intimate connection: for, as Ethelreda's domeſtic turn never led her in ſearch of amuſement out of her own family, the charm of her ſociety continued its influence over her huſband, and the wide circle of her connections, drawn towards her by the irreſiſtible attractions of modeſty, elegant manners, and a cultivated underſtanding.

It was at leaſt two years after the death of Carloville, when that circumſtance became known to his family. The unfortunate Ellen, pining in ignorance of the fate of her loſt child, and that of the wretched Carloville, with which it was connected, ſeemed only kept alive by the hopes of once more ſeeing him reſtored to her. Both her brother and couſin ſpared no poſſible means of diſcovering Carloville for her ſake. Fitz-Piers had taken Caſino Belvedere, where for the advantage of the air his ſiſter lived with her uncle ——whilſt Fitz-Piers ſpent moſt of his time in London, in hopes of procuring the intelligence he was in ſearch of; when moſt unexpectedly, by the confeſſion of one of the felons concerned in the robbery of Carloville in priſon, the certain knowledge of his death was conveyed to his brother, and ſome papers, amongſt which ſome memoranda hinted the manner in which he had diſpoſed of his ſon—but ſo obſcurely, that for a long time they remained in the moſt perplexing uncertainty. At laſt, by the moſt unwearied exertions, Mr. Carloville traced his loſt nephew, placed on the foundation of a public ſchool, under an aſſumed name. It appeared that Carloville made no concealment of the intereſt he took in this boy; whom he ſpoke of as the ſon of a friend of his father's, who was dead, and had left a large family unprovided for. And, moſt probably, to this apparent openneſs he owed the entire concealment of the truth; for none of the perſons to whom this ſtory was known ever ſuſpected its fallacy. His having intended to take care of the boy's education in ſome degree reconciled Fitz-Piers to his memory; ſince he thought it poſſible, in ſpite of all his atrocities, Carloville might have loved this child, and have reſtored him to the rights to which

which he was born, whenever he could do it with ſafety to himſelf and his ſchemes.

This thought was rather conſoling than otherwiſe to Lady Carloville; who, though ſhe had every reaſon to hold his memory in abhorrence, grieved for his death with ſincerity in her heart as well as in her habit; for the real circumſtances of it were humanely concealed from her by her family. The young Lord Carloville, a child equally promiſing in temper and perſon, ſeemed to inherit nothing from his father, but ſtrongly reſembled his mother, who, no longer a prey to grief and anxiety, began to anticipate many years of happineſs for herſelf and her family; and entirely devoting herſelf to his improvement, ſhe gradually loſt the recollection of her former ſorrows in the ample compenſation her ſon's perfections afforded her. As for Mr. Fitz-Piers, having relinquiſhed all expectation of meeting with ſuch a woman as Mrs. Conway, with true old bachelor foreſight he began to think of an alliance for his nephew with one of her daughters!

The Marquis of Aberconway and his Lady, whenever they were at Strathener, cultivated with aſſiduity the friendſhip of Captain and Mrs. Conway, and of Mr. Harwood's family, who occaſionally reſided together at St. Siffrid's Caſtle. Inſenſibly they diſcovered how ſuperior to the hurry and diſſipation of their uſual life was the ſociety at St. Siffrid's. Their ſtay at Strathener was conſiderably prolonged; till at laſt the pleaſures and avocations of the great world became a ſecondary conſideration, or were thought of with reluctance and diſguſt.

It is needleſs to obſerve that Lady Octavia Conway, whoſe taſte for vanity, ſhow, and admiration did not diminiſh, never acquired much reliſh for the company of rational people, and never

never heartily forgave any part of her own or Harwood's family for the mortification ſhe brought upon herſelf. Her fortune, reduced to moderation by the large deductions made from it by the Comte de Clerac, was no temptation to the needy in her own rank; and the ſuſpicions ſhe had purchaſed at ſo high a price, in ſome meaſure counterpoiſed the flattery which high rank and ſome beauty procured her in abundance: ſo that, always on her guard againſt impoſition, ſhe found herſelf reduced to aid a waning complexion with Olympian bloom and Turkiſh dew, which ſhe tried to perſuade herſelf rivalled the lilies and roſes of eighteen; though ſhe could never believe it on the word of her admirers, whom ſhe conſtantly fancied ſhe detected in forming plans on her fortune:——whilſt Lord Aberconway often ſportingly ſaid, that he feared neither his nor Conway's numerous progeny would be the richer for her caution; ſince ſhe moſt unjuſtly charged her own imprudence on them, as if they had been the abettors of the Comte de Clerac.

Mr. Conway (for Lord Orwyn he was determined not to be called) retired to Frampton Lodge, now his ſole reſidence; tried to forget his diſappointments and mortifications in the ſtudies of agriculture and natural philoſophy; and in the midſt of his turnips fancied himſelf another Cincinnatus. But, a courtier and a politician from his youth, Mr. Conway had long loſt all reliſh for rural pleaſures; and ſtudies the very rudiments of which were unknown to him were not calculated either to intereſt or amuſe him. The habitual ſtiffneſs of his manners, and the reſerve he had always practiſed towards his family, made even his ſon a gueſt not always acceptable; ſo that Mrs. Conway had it in her power to ſpend a large portion of her time with her daughter.

Conway,

Conway, too happy in the poſſeſſion of Ethelreda to beſtow a thought on titles, ſtill felt ſome alloy to his felicity, as the moſt perfect has its proportion, in the reflection that his father's whole life had been ſacrificed to the attainment of advantages falſely eſtimated and unjuſtly deſired, and which, having eſcaped him by thoſe very means he took to ſecure them, left him, without a reſource, a prey to diſappointments he fancied he did not ſuffer, at the ſame moment his temper and action made the fulleſt diſcovery of their effects. A ſtriking example, of which an obſerver might ſelect many, from amongſt thoſe who tread the paths of intricate policy, of ſchemes counteracted by the very means taken to enſure their ſucceſs, one of the many inſtances in which a total want of principle is its own puniſhment.

FINIS.

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